

6 1957  
THE  
MONTH

MAY 1957

**PSYCHOLOGY AND WESTERN MAN**

CHARLES BURNS

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MARJORIE REEVES

**ST. MONICA**

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# THE MONTH

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# PSYCHOLOGY AND WESTERN MAN<sup>1</sup>

By

CHARLES BURNS

**I**T MUST HAVE struck many Catholics that there has been in recent years a vast output of books and articles dealing with the relation between psychology or psychiatry and religion. They come in all languages of Europe; from theologians, psychiatrists, and laymen. In this field there is a great ferment, almost a revolution in thought; indeed Karl Stern, Jewish psychiatrist and Catholic convert, calls it the "Third Revolution." It is my task to act as mouthpiece to some of these thinkers, to select and try to interpret some of their strands of thought, and if need be, criticise.

To Cardinal Newman it might have appeared strange that a mere physician should dare to embark on a discussion bearing upon mind and soul as distinct from body. I say this because of a passage in his "Address to Students of Medicine." He is talking of the danger of exclusiveness in all professions, and he goes on to say in relation to the Medical Profession:

Its province is the physical nature of man, and its object is the preservation of that physical nature in its proper state, and its restoration when it has lost it. It limits itself, by its very profession to the health of the body. . . . But, after all, bodily health is not the only end of man, and the medical science is not the highest science of which he is the subject. Man has a moral and a religious nature, as well as a physical, he has a mind and a soul; and the mind and soul have a legitimate authority over the body, and the sciences relating to them have in consequence the precedence of those sciences which relate to the body. And as the soldier must yield to the statesman, when they come into collision with each other, so must the medical man to the priest. . . .

This illustrates the great change which has elapsed since these words were written, one hundred years ago; when the philosophy, or at least the outlook behind medicine, was materialist, and

<sup>1</sup> The second of the "Leycester-King Memorial" lectures.

medical psychology almost unknown. I am not denying to Newman the title of psychologist, because we know what a profound analysis he made of the nature of knowledge and assent. One can venture to hope that he would not entirely have disapproved of the modern doctor's venture into the domain of the priest, and vice versa; but he would have seen its dangers, as perhaps we do not always do.

Since that time the knowledge of unconscious motivation has come to the foreground of the field of human knowledge. The caverns of the mind, of which St. Augustine, one of the great psychologists, spoke long ago, have been explored—as the caves of Lascaux have been explored, the one shedding light on the life of primitive man, the other on the primitive in us.

This new knowledge, or rather the elaboration and working out of age-long ideas about man's nature, would appear to have a bearing on the following aspects of Western man's belief and action, which I have selected as being the most prominent, in the writing of Catholic psychologists and theologians.

Firstly, the individual apprehension of belief, and sources of error. Secondly, the question of asceticism, religious training and practice. Thirdly, the relationship between persons.

Firstly then, what has psychology to say on the question of individual truth, understanding by truth here not scientific or philosophic truth, but personal beliefs and motives for acting in certain ways.

I can best answer this by quoting from a book by Eric Fromm, entitled *Psychoanalysis and Religion*. He says:

Psychoanalysis has given the concept of truth a new dimension. In preanalytic thinking a person could be considered to speak the truth if he believed in what he was saying. Psychoanalysis has shown that subjective conviction is by no means a sufficient criterion of sincerity. A person can believe that he acts out of a sense of justice and yet be motivated by cruelty. He can believe that he is motivated by love and yet be driven by a craving for masochistic dependence. A person can believe that duty is his guide though his main motivation is vanity. In fact most rationalisations are held to be true by the person who uses them. . . . Furthermore in the psychoanalytic process a person learns to recognise which of his ideas have an emotional matrix, and which are only conventional clichés without root in the character structure, and therefore without substance and weight. The psychoanalytic process is itself a search for truth.

What are we to say to this? I think we shall say that we know it already; that we have our examination of conscience, and that we are sufficiently warned against hypocrisy and pharisaism in the New Testament. We could also ask: is it then necessary to undergo this process of analysis before we can know how far we are based on truth and sincerity, and not on emotion and rationalisation? These are pertinent replies to overweening claims, but anything which deepens self-knowledge and clears the air of sophistry and self delusion, is good and salutary. There are indeed people in power who may do immense harm by not knowing something of their unconscious reasons, and this applies to "good" people as well as "bad." Perhaps we can concede that, as a result of diffusion of such notions, people will tend to be more cautious and more self-critical?

This however is at best a negative gain, and we shall find all through that psychology does show this ambivalence: a negative destructive aspect, often indeed salutary, and a positive constructive one as well.

It is claimed too that depth psychology can help to deepen and revivify our grasp of religion, and our faith. It is said that our religious observance has become mechanical and external, without a deep and lasting influence on our daily life. Fr. Victor White puts it thus: "... to many a modern man the symbols employed by Christ and his Church have become every bit as obscure as the Sarcophagi and titles of a Pharaoh. They leave him cold, because he no longer sees their significance and relevance to his own daily life." He, like other Catholic thinkers of the Jungian school, maintain that Jung's psychology offers a challenge to our beliefs, but also a hope that it will help us to grasp our Christian symbols in a deeper and more vivid way; that it will help us to realise that the symbols, the poetry, and the imagery of the Liturgy are not invented as it were by the Church, but correspond to deep-felt needs and beliefs in all peoples of all cultures, which find their real and ultimate significance and expression in the Catholic Faith.

I have not the space to enlarge on these themes. It must be said however that this Way to a richer spiritual life, only one of many, may strike us as rather esoteric. It can only appeal to people of some intellectual formation, and of a certain temperament; we cannot all be Jungians. It does not mean that those of simpler faith are debarred from a participation in the mysteries,

though they may be affected by them at a more unconscious level.

To sum up; it can be claimed that the aim to be achieved through analytic treatment, and to some extent through reading and discussion, is to purify one's motives. To be enabled to perceive and accept the skeletons in our mental cupboard. To face what in Jungian terms is called the Shadow side of the self, and thus to bring the instinctive side into better harmony with the reason; to develop a conscience which is reasonable, admitting guilt but not guilt-obsessed; to become more mature and altruistic, less infantile and egoistic.

At the same time we should become aware of positive qualities and possibilities in our personal selves, and grow more responsive to the myths and symbols which are part of the heritage of the human race.

All this surely is in harmony with the ideals of spiritual formation and religious education, for there may be elements in our religious life which are essentially neurotic or superstitious or infantile, where a knowledge of psychology may help towards a salutary purgation.

We must not claim too much; Freud said of psychoanalysis: "We will try and relieve you of your symptoms, and this will leave you with the unhappiness common to mankind."

By this unhappiness he meant that freedom from symptoms does not mean a Nirvana free of all conflict and frustration. We know too well that life must be a striving towards maturity, towards acceptance. There is only one element in life from which there can be no frustration and no limit, and that is Love, in the form of Charity. Where there is real love, even suffering and sacrifice are tinged with joy.

We come now to the second aspect bearing on the religious psychology of Western man, and that is asceticism. When we think of this word, many of us probably associate it with a mental picture of hair shirts, disciplines, and fastings: things remote from us. But in effect the word means "training," and the means used may be of all kinds. It involves, moreover, the whole question of the relation of the Spirit to the Body.

There has been in recent years a remarkable output of books from Catholic sources on this general theme. But let me first refer back to an essay by Francis Thompson entitled "Health and



Holiness," written about 1895. In this essay he maintained that modern man is unfit for the rigours which were practised of old, and that it is in fact wrong to emulate them. Let me quote the following:

He was a being of another creation. He ate and feared not; he drank, and in all Shakespeare there is no allusion to delirium tremens; his schoolmaster flogged him large-heartedly and he was almost more tickled by the joke than by the cane; he wore a rapier by his side, and stabbed or was stabbed by his brother-man in pure good fellowship and high spirits. For him the whole apparatus of virtue was constructed, a robust system fitted to a robust time. Strong forthright minds were suited by strong forthright direction, resounding vitality by severities of repression; the hot wine of life needed allay. But to our generation uncompromising fasts and severities of conduct are found to be piteously alien; not because, as rash censors say, we are too luxurious, but because we are too nervous, intricate, devitalised. We find our austerities ready made. The east wind has replaced the discipline, dyspepsia the hair shirt. . . . The pride of life is no more; to live is itself an ascetic exercise; we require spurs to begin, not a snaffle to rein back the ardour of being. Man is his own mortification. Hamlet has increased and multiplied, and his seed fills the land.

So speaks Francis Thompson and, in his inimitable ninetyish language, is a precursor of much that is now written in the same vein. (But we must remember that poor Francis Thompson was very far from robust; that he was nervous and devitalised, so we must allow a certain poet's licence in this passage.) I went back to Francis Thompson because Fr. Goldbrunner, in that excellent little book *Holiness is Wholeness*, takes passages from this essay almost as his text; he says for example:

Without generalising unduly, we must agree with Thompson that "the ways and means to holiness seem to have changed, because we ourselves have become so different." [And he goes on to say], Our knowledge of human nature has made great progress and undergone great changes as a result of modern advances in medicine and psychotherapy. The sick body and the sick soul have taught us the conditions necessary for the healthy body and the healthy soul. This development in the knowledge of man is having an effect on the theory of the Christian life in its striving after holiness and in the realm of asceticism. [And again], Our Christian education, our asceticism and striving for perfection, tend all too much to repress and



eliminate the natural soul. There is still no affirmation of our total human nature, the deeper levels of the soul are still excluded from Christian penetration. The defection from the Church in the West is not merely a rejection of Christian faith; it is partly due to a feeling that the Church does not accept the whole of human nature, that inside the Church the deeper levels of the personality cannot breathe and live.

These assertions, and there are many others that could be quoted, do not imply that we are morally or psychologically inferior to previous generations; we are, or are said to be, different. The reason why the elders among us tend to decry each succeeding generation as less virile, less hard-working, less anything you like, is presumably simply because they are different. I myself consider that the present generation of children, and the maligned adolescents, are better than in my generation; more realistic, more frank, more friendly. At any rate we know, alas only too well, that people in our day have shown surpassing moral and physical bravery.

What is in question therefore is something more general than the mere local variation of Western humans. We are aware to a greater degree and more accurately than previously of the nature and functioning of what Fr. Goldbrunner calls the "natural Soul." Another way of describing this would be to take the middle term of St. Paul's "Body, Soul, and Spirit" or more modernly speaking: "Body, Mind and Spirit." This of course is artificial, like any subdivision of the personality, but it does avoid the complete antithesis that so many people make, between Soul, as something ineffable, spiritual; and Body, as something gross, impure, and so on. It is a theme which recurs in Christian thinking, Manichean, Puritan or Jansenist.

The mind or natural soul is the ground where human emotions and impulses operate; it is the middle region between the spiritual end, and the material means. And it must be healthy. In seeking the ideals of poverty, chastity, obedience, in whatever calling, it must beware of the masochism of the self-righteous, or the intolerance of those who unconsciously seek power, although they may be highly ascetic, not to say aseptic in their conduct.

All this seems as though no one now can act simply, in good faith, in the search for sanctity, or in ordinary religious training, without being suspect. Not at all. We continue to respect our

conscious motives, our sincere intentions, but we can no longer be unaware of unhealthy or impure elements that may contaminate the best intentions. We have learnt to know the fixation that prevents separation from the parents, the necessity of spiritual weaning in order to grow to maturity. We can recognise the scrupulous or obsessional, who is driven to expiate a morbid sense of guilt by way of magic ritual.

But all these things are negative, they merely clear our ground, and, let it be said at once that all these theologians recognise and expound the traditional way to holiness. It is perhaps, or is coming to be, a new way; a freer way; a more responsible way; a way in which humiliation, blind obedience, negative morality will play less part. But while we aim at health and wholeness, it is still a way of suffering and acceptance. As Fr. Goldbrunner puts it: "Through the Cross of Christ, holiness and health become one." He speaks of the physical collapse suffered by some of the saints in the course of their formation and calls these "legitimate maladies" in the striving after holiness. In contrast, there are "illegitimate imperillings" of health, caused by false attitudes, false ways of life, "not in accord with the laws of nature nor with the true relationship between the natural and the supernatural." We are learning then, it would seem, to make friends of our senses and to work with our human nature, more than hitherto, in the search for holiness.

In this connection perhaps I may be allowed to quote some remarks of mine from an article in *Blackfriars* in 1950.<sup>1</sup> Fr. John LaFarge, S.J. has been good enough to quote them in his Introduction to a book just published in America entitled *Faith, Reason, and Modern Psychiatry*:

What I am after, in short, is a respect for the nature of man and a recognition of its shortcomings and its needs. To think that prayer and the sacraments, necessary and holy as of course they are, will put everything right no matter what the nature of child or adult may be, no matter how warped the character, or how desolate and depressed the state of mind; to think this is "supernaturalism"; and again a case of "nothing but" . . . .

It is to think only in terms of body and spirit and not of their meeting ground which is mind; it is, in other terms, to create an

<sup>1</sup> In discussing asceticism I am indebted to a *Blackfriars* publication entitled *Asceticism and Modern Man*, 1956.

absolute antithesis between nature and grace. The knowledge of man's true nature, the recovery of "natural law," is a terribly urgent need of our times. The Catholic writer, Thibon, puts it thus "in times past, Christianity had to fight nature; that nature which was so hard, so hermetically closed that grace could hardly penetrate. Today we must fight *for* nature in order to save that minimum of health which is necessary for the grafting of the supernatural."

We now come to the third consideration, which is that pertaining to human relationships. This is a vast subject in itself, and I propose to approach it indirectly by considering the relationship of an analyst to his patient.

It is one of Freud's major discoveries in technique that the analyst should be a kind of silent screen to his patient; silent because at least at first he says little or nothing; a screen or sounding-board because the patient projects on to him his emotions of love and hate and the rest. This relationship is termed the transference. The analyst remains unmoved and detached, at least in theory. Naturally he cannot help reacting to some extent, positively or negatively to the patient; this is termed counter-transference and it is by the resolution, through interpretation, of these attitudes, that the analyst proceeds towards a conclusion. This is a bald narrative of a complicated process, but it must serve. The process is in effect a kind of dialogue even if largely unspoken, between two people—as indeed is any intimate relationship, and its avowed aim is curative.

All psychotherapy of whatever type approximates to this: it is non-directive, because direct advice is avoided; it is detached because the therapist is never shocked, angry, contemptuous, or too sympathetic. He is only, ideally speaking, emotionally involved by "loving" his patient, of whatever kind, in the sense of wishing him well; of achieving a faint approximation to the command "love thy neighbour. . . ."

This does not mean that the question of values, of morality, does not come into it. A non-Christian or materialist therapist does not condemn, because he has no absolute values; to him these are pragmatic or humanist. A Christian therapist does not condemn, because for him the highest in the hierarchy of values is Charity.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This has been vividly described by Dr. Karl Stern in "Spiritual Aspects of Psychotherapy" in *Faith, Reason and Modern Psychiatry*, ed. by F. Braceland. Kenedy, U.S.A., 1956.

Neurotics and delinquents receive admonition and condemnation—often with no effect, or a contrary effect to what is desired; the trouble is, as Dr. Stern puts it: "something went wrong at the infraverbal level of love and identification."

Transference; identification; empathy: these are technical words, but we can use simple ones: understanding, and kindness. These are used as techniques; they are applied by trained people in all sorts of situations which involve helping or curing, in the sense of caring for others. It may seem odd to put it this way, but it is true. This is not to deny that they exist as natural qualities, obviously; but there are many natural virtues and laws which have to be rediscovered, and consciously applied and taught. This type of approach to those who are mentally sick, maladjusted, or anti-social, gives fresh meaning to the phrase: "to understand all is to forgive all." And note that to forgive does not mean to condone or to excuse, as some people appear to assume, when one is discussing for example the modern treatment of delinquency; it does not even exclude punishment. It means to forgive in the sense that a confessor brings forgiveness. Indeed the almost silent detached confessor in his box, may be taken as the forerunner of the analyst! *His* objective is, however, limited in the natural sphere, for it does not include the unconscious elements of conduct; but it is unlimited in the spiritual sense, because he speaks for God. The analyst has no limit to *his* sphere of mind, but no concern whatever with supernatural forgiveness.

I have already indicated that this kind of relationship is not confined to the analytical situation, but has spread in many directions. It is almost a new dimension in human relationships. It allows a patient, or a child, access to our knowledge and skill without obtruding or verbalising it, that is without moralising. It allows the other person to reach self-understanding, conclusions and values, through, but not directly from, us. It teaches by example and friendship rather than by authority. It is patient, it is kind.

It is found in many places, and I merely mention some of them; there is no space to explain the technique or the knowledge that lies behind it. It is seen now in ante-natal care, in natural child birth as it is called; in infant welfare and upbringing, in schools, particularly those for maladjusted children. It is found in some mental hospitals, in some prisons.

It is even possible to hope that in spite of many appearances to the contrary, all men are coming to a better understanding of others; that there is coming to be more tolerance and a deeper sense of justice for society.

All this, you may say, sounds very fine, but even if it is so, is it not simply a general cultural change or swing, with which psychology has little to do? And you may justly add: what has this to do with religion anyway? I will try to answer.

There may well be a cultural change in Western man, as in others, but psychology is then part of this change, and can also claim to affect it in almost every human activity. Much in the same way as, we are told by anthropologists, in primitive races the way of life is conditioned by the way in which children are nurtured, while at the same time this is determined by the cultural patterns already there. As for the relation of these alleged changes in human relationships to religious life, I think this can be answered simply in the words of a theologian who said that a child learns the love of God through the love of its mother. In other words you have to get the human side right; you must first learn to love your neighbour as yourself before you can really love God. It is the same idea that runs through my thesis in general: that you must strengthen and perfect Nature, that it may be susceptible of Grace. That a deepened knowledge of ourselves, our neighbours, and our religion, may deepen also our spiritual life, the life of prayer.

I may appear to be presumptuous, as indeed I feel I have been, in tackling such deep and difficult matters, but I have been mainly summarising the views of many Catholic theologians and psychiatrists whose words I have pondered. I myself would even dare to think that in some respects they may have gone too far; that they may be claiming too much from that modern cult which has come to be known as depth psychology. Only time can tell this, and if we, and they, have been too much carried away by an understandable and valuable enthusiasm, in this age when we feel that only a profound change, a revolutionary ferment, can affect the world, then no doubt Mother Church will give us a salutary admonition.

Perhaps we can make the modest claim that psychology has added something to our understanding. What I have tried to show is the change which is affecting Western man, partly at



least through the influence, even if unrealised, of modern psychology. First, that we are aware of deeper levels in ourselves and have come to a point when we can talk not only of an "examination of conscience" but of an "examination of unconscious conscience." Second, that our ways of striving after holiness have changed and are changing, because we ourselves are different. (I have not dared to suggest what the result should be, but perhaps it is something like the "little way" of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, and other spiritual writers, that we are to follow?)

Thirdly, that in our relationship to others, we are also discovering new ways of approach; that there may be, if our civilisation is spared, more tolerance, more understanding, more kindness, at least here and there in our sorry world.

I dare to hope that Fr. Leycester-King would have approved, indeed is approving, of what I have tried to convey.

## CHRIST AND HISTORY

By

MARJORIE REEVES

**T**HE HISTORIAN is not a novelist or a writer of ghost-stories. He believes that the people he studies were (or are) real people. He believes this passionately. His work would lose all its point if his characters were fictitious or belonged to a shadow-world. His concern is with flesh and blood. Thus his primary faith is that the past really happened, that the people he is studying really thought, felt and acted. Without this faith he is simply not a historian. From this faith springs his rigorous determination to get at the truth about events and people at all costs, in other words, to expose the fictitious.

For instance, a fascinating debate has been going on for some time now as to whether King Arthur was a real person. People who are thrilled by the tales of knightly deeds which centre in Arthur are sometimes inclined to say: "Does it matter if he actually lived? He stirs my blood, therefore he is real to me."

I do not think the historian can ever be content with this. He is, of course, interested in the ideas of chivalry embodied in Arthurian legend, but he wants, above all, to know what actually happened, that is, what core of real action by real men lies at the heart of these stories. I think the historian and the Christian share this passion for flesh and blood as distinct from legend.

If the historian starts with a primary faith that people really existed and can be studied, he also starts with some sort of belief about what real people *are*. What is he looking for as he tracks his people through his documents—for the instinctive behaviour of animals, the automatic working of machines—or what? He brings *to* his documents his own ideas of how people are likely to behave and in his mind there is already some sort of answer to the question “What is Man?” If we inquire where he has picked up these presuppositions, the reply surely is: from his common experience of people whom he meets and observes, likes or dislikes. He brings his experience of life *to* the interpretation of history. Take a very simple example: if he is trying to check the truth of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle’s account of how Harold dashed up to Yorkshire to fight Tostig and then back down again to Hastings to fight William the Conqueror, he will ask himself: “Could these men have possibly ridden so far in the time?” And his answer will come from common experience of the capabilities of men and horses. And so also in more complicated cases he will bring his experience of people to the interpretation of his documents. He will say, for instance, “I think *this* account is more likely to be true than *that*, because this is just how I think people would behave, it is true to my idea of human nature.” No one can start on history without some presuppositions of this kind. So you will find that the rest of this essay starts from the belief that men are *not* animals or machines, but *persons*. A little of what I mean by a person will, I hope, appear as we go on.

The first consequence of this faith is that I believe that the study of history is a *two-way traffic*. You cannot force real persons into ready-made moulds you have prepared for them; you will be unable to make them conform rigidly to general laws you have constructed. If you believe that your historical characters are real, you dare not try to make their history as you want it to be—in your own image. Every historian reaches the point where he says: “Well, this action seems entirely out of character,



but the documentary evidence appears good; he must be a more complex person than I had thought. I must revise my ideas of him." If I say to you "William the Conqueror," I am sure this will conjure up in your minds an image of the typical conqueror—energetic, ruthless, bent on dominating by force. How surprising then, to find him going to Durham in a sceptical mood to view the relics of St. Cuthbert and becoming so overawed by the experience that he jumps on his horse and rides miles to get away from the dead saint!

Thus, although he starts with his own ideas about people, the historian soon finds that people in history begin to teach him—they "come back at him." If he is really open to new truth, not stuck in his preconceived notions and old categories, an experience of history can make as sharp an impact on him as a new experience of people in life itself. This new experience is, indeed, the historian's reward for having faith in the reality of the persons he studies.

Many of the characters in history are people who were afire with some great passion, pursuing their cause or ideal sometimes even to the point of fanaticism or craziness. Now, of course, the historian *can* remain quite unmoved by such phenomena: he can shrug his shoulders at their antics and apply his own special formula to explain them. If, for instance, he believes that the state of a man's health largely accounts for what he does, he can—as one historian has done—ascibe a high religious passion to high blood pressure, and leave it at that. But if he believes that human beings are unique persons, making real moral choices and pursuing their chosen ends in their own unique ways, then he will discover that these historical people make great demands upon him. They say, in effect, "You cannot really understand us unless you make the attempt to enter into our choices and our passions." By the use of his sympathetic imagination the historian tries to do this—to stand, for a moment, in the shoes of, say, Hildebrand or Philip II of Spain or John Wesley. He lets himself, for a moment, be caught up in their feelings, perhaps even to the point of wanting to spring to the same actions. But only for a moment. He knows he must disentangle himself and look at them with critical detachment, for, after all, they only make *limited* demands on him. Trying to understand Philip II of Spain does not commit the historian to believing in the Inquisition,

and however enthusiastic he may become over Bonnie Prince Charlie, he need not feel impelled to rush off and fetch a Jacobite king from over the water. Of course he can be deeply influenced by the noble work of men like William Wilberforce, or Abraham Lincoln, but only seldom will he be converted for good to serving exactly the same great causes. For these people and their purposes belong, each of them, to one day and generation alone.

But when the historian approaches the New Testament writers in this mood he finds he is, in very truth, playing with fire. Once again it must be stressed that he *need* not come in this mood. If, for instance, he believes that the class struggle is the key to all historical doors, he will quickly see in the Gospels a little group of under-dogs struggling to express their social discontents under a rather remarkable leader, and he need see nothing more. He will involve himself no further, remaining detached and quite satisfied with his solution. If, however, he believes that history is the far more dangerous game of trying to understand real persons, he will find himself here involved with men who make unlimited demands upon him. For the New Testament writers had come under the influence of a historic Event which they believed to be true, not just for themselves, but for *all* men in all ages of time. When they preached and wrote, therefore, they were speaking, not just to their contemporaries, but to all ages. To the historian they say: "You cannot come anywhere near an understanding of our enthusiasm or our message unless you believe that the Event to which we bear witness is true for all time and for you in particular, as well as for us."

When the historian asks them for their credentials, they point back to this Event in history which changed them—the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. Now the scholar must, of course, scrutinise all the documentary evidence to satisfy himself that Jesus of Nazareth really lived—and no documents in the world have been so continuously and rigorously scrutinised—but he has then a far more searching question to answer: "What really happened? In Jesus of Nazareth did the Son of God really live, die and rise again on this earth?" The New Testament writers he is studying say *Yes*, and in their *Yes* he can feel all the fire of those who have come right up against Jesus Christ in their experience and are utterly convinced.

Have you ever tried to pass on a real conviction to someone else—a conviction, shall we say, that a certain picture is very beautiful? You can describe it, or argue about its beauty, but so often in the end you can only say "Come and see for yourself!" In the same way the New Testament writers cannot transfer ready-made to the historian their conviction that Jesus is trustworthy. What they do is to make the historian look for himself, to bring him to the point where he must face for himself the question "Is Jesus Christ the Son of God?" Now indeed he is cornered! There is no escape—he must give a Yes or a No to this question for himself; he cannot remain neutral, for this is equivalent to No. He will not find the answer by going back to his documents for further scrutiny, for this is the demand of one person on another person. "You cannot know Me," says this man, "Unless you accept Me on My own terms—Son of God and Son of Man, belonging to all ages and all peoples."

This is to many historians the most unpalatable, indigestible mouthful of all history, but something must be done about it. Either Jesus was deluded or we have here the most terrific "come-back" that history has ever made at us, and it will radically alter our whole belief about men and history. If we try to be true historians, in the way I have been describing, we shall, at any rate, try to open our hearts and minds to the impact of these historical events, as recorded in the New Testament—always with the possibility of concluding that these men were all deluded, but alive to the dangers of a too-easy delusion theory.

If we let the New Testament writers witness in our hearts to the sovereignty of this historical event, the Incarnation, we find ourselves drawn towards a blazing, red-hot centre of meaning in all history. Think what the Incarnation means: the Creator and Ruler of this whole universe, and of universes of universes beyond our conceiving, steps into our little time-sequence on our little planet, so that in flesh-and-blood concreteness men can see, hear and touch the reality that sustains all men in all places and all times. This is strange and startling news; it was so in Jesus' day and it still is. Then and now, many people have felt that the fleeting sequence of events in time and space was futile, a series of unreal bubbles slipping by with no permanent meaning, while God, eternal Reality, the Absolute (whatever they chose to call it), was far removed in a timeless, unchanging existence. To such

people it is a startling, even a shocking, experience to contemplate what Jesus did to history. He brought this remote reality right into it. He took one short series of these bubbles of time—the few years of His own life—and filled them with tremendous eternal meaning. But He did much more than fill this minute little stretch of time with significance: in every moment of it He was proclaiming that the God who filled *His* life was active, ceaselessly and mightily, in *all* moments of time, meeting and sustaining *all* men in their earthly activities. Remote Chinese building the Great Wall of China, Hannibal crossing the Alps with his elephants, Columbus sailing westward in his tiny ships, the French burning the Bastille—none of these were beyond the power of God which in every human situation is facing men with choices of good and evil. Thus all events in history, B.C. and A.D., have meaning, but only in the one event of the life of Christ is this made plain and open. The sceptics will say: "But it isn't proved; it remains a colossal guess on which Jesus of Nazareth staked His life." The New Testament writers believed that in the Resurrection God had intervened in history in a unique way, to confirm the guess, to vindicate the faith that He was *in* history and not remote *from* it, to proclaim that just because the life of Jesus had not been futile, no part of history was futile. In this sense, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus give us the key to history.

To enter into this conviction that in all history God is meeting Man, does not lessen one whit the importance of scrutinising documents sharply and developing a critical attitude towards evidence. The study of history becomes only more exacting as well as more exciting, for what really happened in history is now so much more important, since at the heart of it there are tremendous events that give dignity, meaning and hope to all men's lives. To accept Jesus Christ on His own terms as the Lord of all history leaves us free and eager in mind to explore all the multifarious activities and innumerable choices of men for good and for evil.

# ST. MONICA

By

MURIEL SPARK

**M**ONICA, the mother of St. Augustine, was born at Tagaste in North Africa in the year 332, and died at Ostia in the fifty-sixth year of her life.

Among saints, she is the most fortunate in her first biographer. St. Augustine does not give us a long history of his mother, but what he says of her is everywhere immediate and powerful. Her character pervades the first nine books of the *Confessions*. If that were merely a work of fiction Monica would still be one of the memorable women of literature, and the relationship between mother and son one of the most interesting.

Monica had intrigued her son's imagination. While his closest friends—those who exerted most influence on his mind—remain eloquent impressions, he renders Monica's personality in the round. His father, son and brother are portrayed in a glimpse but he gives to his mother totality and magnitude:

Much I omit but I will not omit whatsoever my soul would bring forth concerning that Thy handmaid, who brought me forth, both in the flesh, that I might be born to this temporal light, and in heart, that I might be born to Light eternal.

Monica's character presents a number of curious contrasts. There is a difference between Monica up to the time of her widowhood and the type of woman she became after her husband's death; a difference between her attitude to the world in general and her dealings with Augustine. In the one aspect she is the exemplary type of woman saint, displaying the virtues of gentleness, patience, modesty and extreme tact; but in everything that touched her son she became a sort of holy terror, she was above tact, she pursued him recklessly over land and sea, badgered bishops on his behalf, parted him from a beloved mistress. In all her ordinary transactions she is that withdrawn, self-contained, "chaste and sober widow" whom Augustine extols:



so frequent in almsdeeds, so full of duty and service to Thy saints, no day intermitting the oblation at Thine altar, twice a day, morning and evening, without any intermittance, coming to Thy church, not for idle tattlings and old wives' fables, but that she might hear Thee in Thy discourses, and Thou in her prayers.

While to other appearances, her behaviour was that of a tiresome possessive mother, one of those who wield over their children a tyranny of tears and long-suffering, who turn up at the least comfortable moments, who always know best and suffer from chronic rectitude. Monica, moreover, possessed the exasperating justification of the visionary. She was highly civilised, she was deeply primitive. If she had not been holy she would probably have been insufferable.

Tagaste, the birthplace of both Monica and Augustine was situated in what is now Algeria, bordering on Tunisia; the region was at that time one of the most fruitful holdings of the Empire. They were of the great North African stock, the Berbers. Monica was born in the birth year of St. Jerome, of a Christian family and in an environment where schism was rife and paganism still bubbled below the surface.

She was brought up by a "certain decrepit maidservant" to whose diligence Monica claimed that she owed her religious disposition. This old woman must have been particularly grim, for she would not permit the children to drink between meals—not even water, though they were parched with thirst—in order to restrain their appetite for wine when it should later come within their reach. An incident recorded of Monica's childhood also has to do with wine-drinking.

When she, as though a sober maiden, was bidden by her parents to draw wine out of the hogshead, holding the vessel under the opening, before she poured the wine into the flagon, she sipped a little with the tip of her lips . . . And thus by adding to that little, daily littles, she had fallen into such a habit as greedily to drink off her little cup brim-full almost of wine. Where was then that discreet old woman, and that her earnest countermanding? Would aught avail against a secret disease, if Thy healing hand, O Lord, watched not over us? . . . For a maid-servant with whom she used to go to the cellar, falling to words with her little mistress, when alone with her, taunted her with this fault, with most bitter insult,

calling her wine-bibber. With which taunt she, stung to the quick, saw the foulness of her fault, and instantly condemned and forsook it.

It is true that Monica retained a particular touchy reserve about wine; she would taste it only for courtesy's sake, and when, following a local custom, she distributed wine to the faithful at the martyrs' tombs, she contrived to make it "not only very watery, but unpleasantly heated with carrying about."

She was married at about the age of twenty-two to a pagan husband, Patricius, of noble origin and declining fortune, who held some magisterial rank in Tagaste. He was notoriously hot-tempered, and as a husband very generous, very unfaithful. Monica handled him admirably:

She had learned not to resist an angry husband, not in deed only, but not even in word. Only when he was smoothed and tranquil, and in a temper to receive it, she would give an account of her actions, if haply he had overhastily taken offence.

Which piece of wisdom Monica was wont to dispense to the matrons of the town who suffered greatly from their husbands' beatings, such being the manners of Tagaste; and those who took her advice found it marvellously effective. By her tact and composure Monica also managed to quell and gain the affection of a troublesome mother-in-law and a houseful of murmuring servants. She gained a reputation as a peacemaker, receiving confidences which she never disclosed except to bring discordant parties to reconciliation. We are told that she was further endowed with pleasant conversational gifts and gracious ways, by which she endeared herself to her difficult husband.

Of course, many women, not particularly noted for sanctity, have done as much. The real test of Monica's quality in the early years of her marriage was her position as a Christian in a pagan household, for it was some seventeen years before Patricius became a Christian. Augustine declares, "it was her earnest desire that Thou my God, rather than he should be my father; and in this Thou didst aid her to prevail over her husband."

Monica had three children, Navigius who was mild and pious, marvellous Augustine and a daughter who it is thought was named Perpetua. Obtaining her husband's tolerance, she brought them up in Christian doctrine. Augustine was not baptised in his



infancy, nor perhaps were his brother and sister. But he speaks of being dedicated by Monica in a special way to the Christian faith:

As a boy I had already heard of an eternal life, promised us through the humility of the Lord our God stooping to our pride; and even from the womb of my mother, who greatly hoped in Thee, I was sealed with the mark of His cross and salted with His salt.

It is strange that Monica should have followed the dubious custom of late baptism, against which Augustine later inveighed in the same breath as he makes the excuse for her, that she foresaw the great temptations of his youth, "and preferred to expose to them the clay whence I might afterwards be moulded, than the very cast, when made." When, as a child, Augustine was taken ill and thought to be dying, having himself asked to be baptised, Monica was in great anxiety to procure this sacrament for him, and would have done so had he not suddenly recovered. One of Monica's characteristics was her adherence to popular and local religious customs; this of the deferred baptism may have been an instance.

Towards the end of her husband's life Monica won him to the Christian faith, but she was not of one mind with him concerning Augustine who was then entering his sixteenth year. For when Patricius, "as already anticipating his descendants," observed with delight his son's growing into high-spirited manhood, Monica did not share this natural response; on the contrary, she was "startled with a holy fear and trembling" and took occasion privately to warn Augustine "not to commit fornication, but especially never to defile another man's wife." At this stage Monica's words seemed, as he says, womanish advices which he should blush to obey.

Augustine makes it a point that, for all his mother's fears for his chastity she was not for providing him with a wife:

She feared lest a wife should prove a clog and hindrance to my hopes. Not those hopes of the world to come, which my mother reposed in Thee; but the hope of learning, which both my parents were too desirous I should attain; my father, because he had next to no thought of Thee, and of me but vain conceits; my mother, because she accounted that those usual courses of learning would not only be no hindrance, but even some furtherance towards attaining Thee.

Monica's ambitions for Augustine begin to emerge at this time with some intensity, and as in later years, she combines, with a kind of economy, her intentions for his worldly success and those for his salvation. Already she has the end in view, and the means do not apparently trouble her. Consequently her actions are not directed towards simplifying any immediate situation that concerns Augustine. He is prevented from marriage or promised in marriage according as it seems expedient to Monica. One does not get the impression that she was greatly solicitous for his current well-being. In many ways she is like one of those inspired resolute women of the Old Testament, and a saint to be contemplated rather than copied.

It is not surprising that Monica acted as if her son was exceptional, since he was exceptional. Augustine, reviewing her life with his wonderful sense of Providence, saw the hand of God in all her actions. Her admonitions to chastity, he says, "were Thine, and I knew it not; and I thought that Thou wert silent and that it was she who spake." In such a case it is not surprising that Monica carried on as if the future shape of Christendom depended on her son's conversion, for it so largely did.

She became a widow about her fortieth year when Augustine entered his nineteenth. He was pursuing his studies with success at the new city of Carthage and had by this time embarked on his liaison with his faithful mistress who presently bore him a son. This irregularity did not apparently distress Monica nearly so much as his adherence to Manichean beliefs, on which account she mourned Augustine as one dead; "more than mothers weep the bodily deaths of their children. For she, by that faith and spirit which she had from Thee, discerned the death wherein I lay."

At first she closed her house to him, could hardly bear to eat at the same table; "abhorring and detesting" he says, "the blasphemies of my error." However, a dream to which she attached great authority persuaded her to receive him as before. In such matters she possessed the discrimination of the true visionary; "for she could, she said, through a certain feeling, which in words she could not express, discern between Thy revelations, and the dreams of her own soul." This dream which so changed Monica's attitude is recorded by Augustine:

She saw herself standing on a certain wooden rule, and a shining youth coming towards her, cheerful and smiling upon her, herself

grieving, and overwhelmed with grief. But he having enquired of her the causes of her grief and daily tears, and she answering that she was bewailing my perdition, he bade her rest contented, and told her to look and observe, "That where she was, there was I also." And when she looked, she saw me standing by her in the same rule.

When she told Augustine this dream he interpreted it to mean, "that she should not despair of being one day what I was." But she, without hesitation, replied, "No, for it was not told me that Where he, there thou also; but Where thou, there he also."

This dream, in which she so closely identifies herself with the Catholic faith, she took as a promise of Augustine's conversion; it so thoroughly convinced her that she drew consolation and hope from it for years to come. Meanwhile the promptitude and correctness of her reply impressed Augustine. It appealed to the young logician in him:

That she was not perplexed by the falsity of my interpretation, and so quickly saw what was to be seen, and which I certainly had not perceived before she spake, even then moved me more than the dream itself.

From his first interpretation of her dream, the possibility seems to have been in his mind that Monica might one day take to Manicheism; and it is, indeed, a wonder that she who always inclined to think of herself together with Augustine, and being of a visionary temperament, did not succumb to that poetic and imaginative heresy.

Augustine's Manicheism brought out the dramatic matriarch in Monica. He was outwardly more free of her control than in his boyhood when he had scorned her advice, but now a relationship less tangible yet closer appears between them. She holds him with her tears and by her visions, by refusing him her house and taking him back again, she arrests his attention by outwitting him in simple logic. At this period also, Monica went to a bishop for whom she had a particular regard, imploring him to discuss religion with Augustine. The bishop refused: Augustine was unteachable, and besides, very tricky to argue with. Monica would not be satisfied; "but urged him more, with entreaties and many tears, that he would see me and discourse with me; he, a little displeased with her importunity, saith, 'Go thy ways, and

God bless thee, for it is not possible that the son of these tears should perish.'” Monica, who often discerned the voice of Heaven in the words of others, took this answer as a divine promise.

Augustine, surrounded by his friends, and under distinguished patronage, taught rhetoric in his native town for a time, and subsequently for some nine years at Carthage. During this period he can not have been much in Monica’s company. These were the critical years of his spiritual growth, and although throughout his writings Augustine speaks admiringly of his mother’s perceptive mind—as that of a “natural philosopher”—she probably had no direct intellectual influence upon him. Her influence was rather personal and affective. And it is rather to the efficacy of her prayers and tears in obtaining his conversion that Augustine repeatedly draws attention: “Through her tears night and day poured out, was a sacrifice offered for me unto Thee.” One does not know if Monica’s thoughts were occupied on other matters throughout these years; the impression given by the *Confessions* is that she was wholly absorbed in Augustine, her attention fixed unremittingly on him. That this is probably true is indicated by the degree of Monica’s alarm when he decided to leave Africa.

This was in 383. He made up his mind to go to Rome. Monica put up a strong opposition, but without success. Distracted, she then followed him as far as the coast. Here the scene was set for a battle of wills. Monica clung to him passionately; he should go no further, or if he did she would accompany him.

Augustine was thirty years of age; he was intent on going to Rome, and without his mother; and, understandably, with the least possible distress to himself. The story of his escape is a dramatic one, and in telling it Augustine seems to recapture the original exhilaration and pathos:

I feigned that I had a friend whom I could not leave, till he had a fair wind to sail. And I lied to my mother, and such a mother, and escaped. Refusing to return without me, I scarcely persuaded her to stay that night in a place hard by our ship, where was an Oratory in memory of the blessed Cyprian. That night I privily departed. The wind blew and swelled our sails, and withdrew the shore from our sight, and she on the morrow was there, frantic with sorrow. And with complaints and groans filled Thine ears, who didst then disregard them; while through my desires Thou wert hurrying me

to end all desire, and the earthly part of her affection to me was chastened by the allotted scourge of sorrows. For she loved my being with her, as mothers do, but much more than many. . . . And yet, after accusing my treachery and hardheartedness, she betook herself again to intercede for me, went to her wonted place, and I to Rome.

Augustine probably got the escape idea from the *Aeneid*, but Monica was no wretched Dido. Less than two years later she embarked for Milan where Augustine was established. It was a stormy passage, but having received in a vision assurance of their safe arrival, "she comforted the very mariners by whom passengers unacquainted with the deep used rather to be comforted."

On her arrival she learned that Augustine had abandoned the Manichean heresy, "though not yet a Catholic Christian"; he was apparently surprised that she did not seem overjoyed at this news. She looked for a more positive decision, and told him calmly: "She believed in Christ, that before she departed this life, she should see me a Catholic believer." At the same time she intensified her efforts to intercede for him.

In Milan she conceived a great love for the saintly bishop Ambrose, for his having lately exerted a benign influence on her son: "That man she loved as an angel of God." So high was her reverence for St. Ambrose that on his account she was induced to give up certain religious customs to which she had been greatly attached all her life. In Africa it had been the custom to fast on Saturdays. Also, it had been her habit to commemorate the martyrs by distributing food and wine to Christians assembled at the shrines. She did not find the Saturday fast in Milan, and when she arrived at the church with her basket of food and wine she was turned away by the porter. Monica lost no time in enquiring the reason, using Augustine as a messenger to Ambrose on these points. (Some say that she seized this opportunity to bring them together.) On the question of the Saturday fast Ambrose replied simply that it was not the custom in Milan because it had never been so. On the other point, he forbade the practice on the grounds that it might lead to excessive eating and drinking in the churches, and moreover, it resembled too closely some current pagan usages.

It went hard with Monica to give up her favourite observances, but so she did. Augustine, knowing the strength of his mother's will, marvelled how readily she gave in to Ambrose, declaring it



doubtful that she would have yielded to anyone else. Ambrose, in his turn, greatly admired Monica for her devout bearing, her eager spirit and the good things she did. So that, says Augustine, "when he saw me, he often burst forth into her praises; congratulating me that I had such a mother."

A few months after her arrival in Milan, Monica was involved in the exciting siege of the basilica where Ambrose usually officiated. There Ambrose and his people kept watch in the church while it was surrounded for some days by the soldiers of the Empress Justina, who wanted the building for her Arians. As might be expected, Monica was prominently present among the faithful, taking a leading part in their witness.

Augustine's mistress had joined him in Milan, together with their son Adeodatus. This union had become a hindrance both to Augustine's career and to his baptism which was now in prospect. "Continual effort," he writes, "was made to have me married. I wooed, I was promised, chiefly through my mother's pains."

At this time an amusing experiment was tried by Augustine on his mother, with her co-operation. Having a lively faith in her visionary powers he put her up to praying for a special vision which would reveal something concerning his future marriage. Monica heartily undertook this enterprise, but was unlucky in her visions so far as the marriage was concerned. What she "saw" she dismissed as vain and fantastic things.

Shrewd Monica eventually found a girl, two years under marriageable age, for whom Augustine agreed to wait. Procrastination probably seemed the wisest course to Monica. Meanwhile the woman with whom Augustine had lived so long was despatched to Africa, greatly to his misery, while the boy Adeodatus was left in Monica's charge.

When, in the summer of that year Augustine was resolved not only to receive baptism, but to follow a celibate life, Monica's ambitions were realised beyond her hopes. "She rejoiced, she triumphed."

At Cassiacum, a country villa had been placed at Augustine's disposal, and there he retired to prepare for his baptism with Monica and a small company of friends. The party included his son Adeodatus who was a catechumen like himself, and his untroublesome brother Navigius. Monica is seen at last tranquil and benevolent and satisfied. She took charge of the company

"as though," writes Augustine, "she had been mother of us all; so served us, as though she had been child to us all."

In those dialogues of Augustine which refer to this idyllic interlude, Monica is given a revealing part. Allowing for the rhetoric of the occasion—for the speeches attributed to her are unlikely to be accurate reports—the role she occupies in the dialogues at least indicates Augustine's mental image of her at this time. He conceives her as a sort of Diotima figure in that country-house symposium. Hers is the role of untrammelled wisdom rather than a discursive one. It is stated that, listening to Monica, the company forgets her sex and believes it is listening to some divine doctor; and Augustine professes himself to be ravished with delight, contemplating the divine source whence flow Monica's thoughts. Although these and similar references, unlike those in the *Confessions*, have no claim to be considered historical, they certainly represent some aspects of the actual wise oracular Monica.

After Augustine's baptism he prepared to take Monica back to Africa with his brother and son. They travelled to Rome, staying nearby at Ostia on the Tiber. There the memorable scene occurred in which Monica and Augustine, standing by a window that overlooked a garden, shared a mystical experience or at least a kind of philosophical ecstasy:

We were discoursing together, alone, very sweetly . . . enquiring between ourselves of what sort the eternal life of the saints was to be, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man. And when our discourse was brought to that point, that the very highest delight of the earthly senses, in the very purest material light, was, in respect of the sweetness of that life, not only not worthy of comparison, but not even of mention; we raising ourselves with a more glowing affection towards the "selfsame" did by degrees pass through all things bodily, even the very heaven whence sun and moon and stars shine upon the earth; yea, we were soaring higher yet, by inward musing, and discourse, and admiring of Thy works; and we came to our own minds, and went beyond them, that we might arrive at that region of never-failing plenty, where Thou feedest Israel for ever with the food of truth, and where life is the Wisdom by whom all these things are made. And while we were discoursing and panting after her, we slightly touched on her with the whole effort of our heart; and we sighed, and there we leave bound the first fruits of the Spirit; and returned to vocal



expressions of our mouth, where the word spoken has beginning and end.

Towards the end of this sublime conversation Monica declared that, for her part, she had no further delight in this life, now that her hopes for Augustine were abundantly fulfilled. She had, in a sense, advanced ahead of herself into eternity. "What do I here?" she said.

About five days later Monica fell sick with fever. Unconscious for a while, she came round to see her two sons and grandson by her bed. "Where was I?" she enquired.

It was known to Monica's family that her heart had been set on being buried in her native town, in the ground prepared for her beside her husband. And apparently there had been in her mind some superstition that the place of burial affected the disposal of bodies at the Resurrection. But now on her death bed, her family were amazed to hear her state calmly, "Here shall you bury your mother"; and Augustine especially rejoiced at her freedom from this last temporal anxiety. She died a few days later, leaving no instructions for her embalming or mode of burial, but "desired only to have her name commemorated at Thy altar, which she had served without intermission of one day."

On her death, says Augustine, his life was torn, since his life and hers had been as one life. This is probably more than a verbal conceit. Their spiritual affinity was more intense than their natural relationship, though it followed the same pattern. This is a recurrent theme with Augustine. He continually adapts the scriptural text, "I am in travail over you afresh, until I can see Christ's image formed in you," to illustrate Monica's spiritual motherhood. "The mother of my flesh," he writes, "even more lovingly travailed in birth of my salvation." And again, "With how much more vehement anguish she was now in labour of me in the spirit, than at her childbearing in the flesh."

Monica is most often remembered for her persevering prayers and tears. In the office of St. Monica there is an emphasis on her weeping, curiously exultant and lyrical:

This mother wept and prayed assiduously to obtain Augustine's conversion.

She wept both day and night, did this afflicted mother, and interceded earnestly for her son.

Behold her, this widow, who knows how to weep; she who sheds such continuous and such bitter tears over her son.

Monica was not the lachrymose type of woman in the ordinary sense, on the contrary she strikes one as being good and tough. It is one more instance of her paradoxical nature, that her almost primitive capacity for weeping and bewailing her son combines with her restrained and happy bearing in other respects. Augustine was much taken up with the mystery of tears, when considering his own grief on the death of his young friend:

May I learn from Thee why weeping is sweet to the miserable? Unless we mourned in Thine ears, we should have no hope left. Whence then is sweet fruit gathered from the bitterness of life, from groaning, tears, sighs, and complaints? Doth this sweeten it, that we hope Thou hearest?

The cultus of St. Monica emerged towards the thirteenth century, when her feast was observed in many places. About 1430, when devotion to Monica was widespread, a search was authorised for her remains which, though they had been moved from their original resting place still lay at Ostia. Her relics were discovered and translated to Rome on a Palm Sunday, and it is declared that in the course of the journey several sick children, brought by their mothers to the passing coffin, were healed.

## PERCY WYNDHAM LEWIS

### *A Valedictory*

By

DEREK STANFORD

"A GREAT INTELLECT is gone, a great modern writer is dead." These were Mr. T. S. Eliot's obituary words on Wyndham Lewis in *The Sunday Times*.<sup>1</sup> For five years he

<sup>1</sup> 10 March 1957.

had been hopelessly blind, but had continued with his work, recording on a dictaphone fresh compositions in fiction and non-fiction. A person without a grain of self-pity, he endured for many years without complaint the virtual ostracism of much of his writing. Since the war, that tide had turned, and his work was beginning to enter into its own. An early study by his faithful disciple, Hugh Gordon Porteus, an excellent critic, had been followed in 1955 with an interpretation by Hugh Kenner. A third assessment is being published this summer by an American writer, Geoffrey Wagner.

Artist, novelist, critic, pamphleteer, Percy Wyndham Lewis died on 8 March, aged 72, a rebel all-rounder. He was of the age-class of T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and James Joyce, whom, along with himself, he described as constituting "the men of 1914." His first fiction, *Tarr* (1918), was hailed by Pound as "the most vigorous and volcanic English novel of our time," while Eliot spoke of the author as possessing "the thought of the modern and the energy of the cave-man."

But already by this time he had fluttered the dovescots of conventional art and letters by his production of the magazine *Blast* with its strident manifesto of Vorticism. This movement, to which a number of young artists and poets temporarily subscribed (Richard Aldington, Ezra Pound, William Roberts, Gaudier Brzeska, Edward Wadsworth and others), bore some resemblance to Futurism, which Marinetti was parading at the time. But whereas Futurism sought to express the element of motion in moving objects, Vorticism sought to freeze out that movement and lock the object in a stasis of form. In *Blasting and Bombardiering* (1937), Wyndham Lewis reports how Marinetti one day pressed him to declare himself a Futurist, and how he answered the Italian impresario by quoting a line of Baudelaire: "Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes."

Vorticism, then, was a kind of classicism, a classicism shorn of those academic trappings which have so often trammelled its proponents since the Renaissance revival of learning. Perhaps it would be simpler to call Vorticism an organised impulse to tidy things up—an aesthetic of the "turn-out" and the "spring-clean." The essence of this matter is aptly symbolised in a free-verse poem which appeared in the first number of *Blast*:

## BLESS THE HAIRDRESSER.

He attacks Mother Nature for a small fee.

Hourly he ploughs heads for sixpence,

Scours chins and lips for threepence.

He makes a systematic mercenary war on this  
WILDERNESS.

He trims aimless and retrograde growths

into CLEAN ARCHED SHAPES and ANGULAR  
PLOTS.

This may seem an innocent *jeu d'esprit*, but all Wyndham Lewis's future development has been in strict accordance with its thought. In 1927, under the title of *Time and Western Man*, he published his attack on the Bergsonian philosophy of flux and its influence on the arts (impressionism, the inner monologue, and other subjective relativist conventions). A second broadside in a similar direction came in 1931 with *The Diabolical Principle and the Dithyrambic Spectator*, a blasting critique of literary satanism and amateur surrealist "automatic writing." Looking back on the period of *Blast*, and speaking of T. E. Hulme and himself, Wyndham Lewis neatly summed up the preference and prejudice of his approach. "We preferred," he wrote, "something more metallic and resistant than the pneumatic surface of the cuticle. We preferred a helmet to a head of hair. A scarab to a jelly-fish."

A logical extension of this attitude is Wyndham Lewis's predilection for the "Ho-ho-ness of things" (a spartan counterpart to the "Ah-ness of things," as the Japanese term "the melancholy inherent in animal life"). Such a preference helped to make him the powerful satirist that he was, and also accounts for the enmity with which his writings were often received in the years between the Wars. *The Apes of God* (1930) is fictional flagellation at its best. Its victims are the crank camp-followers of art, literary exhibitionists, pygmies of the mind. Bloomsbury, however, detected its own features, and entered on a long vendetta of silence.

By 1937, Wyndham Lewis was admitting that he was thoroughly "bepoliticked," a state which continued to prevail till his death. What these politics were is hard to say—certainly in terms of existing British parties. A sentiment of being "agin the government," and agin most majority aims and view-points was a constant element in his make-up. Ideologies are never ideal, and in his novel *Revenge for Love* (1937), the types of dishonest Marxist

intellectuals, then much in evidence, were bitinglly depicted. The fact that this book appeared during the Spanish Civil War (part of its plot being set in Spain), and that its author had also written a study of Hitler in 1931, not entirely denunciatory, gave some credence to those who denounced him as a fascist or martinet. A later, semi-fictional, political essay, *Rotting Hill* (1951), goes far to clear him of this accusation. The book is a dialogue exposition of the pros and cons of Tory and Labour. Both sides are given extremely rough treatment, and Soviet Communism likewise gets abused. Neither does there seem good reason to believe that the dictators of the Axis, had they still lived, would have fared any better. In view of his all-round disapproval, it is probably preciser to think of Wyndham Lewis as the voice of an eternal opposition. His method in argument was always one of provocation and retaliation. Add to this his admitted possession of a "tough" non-humanitarian eye which "does not soften what it sees," and we understand the dyspathy which sentimentalists, of every hue, entertain for his work.

In his recent fiction—*Rotting Hill*, *Self-Condemed* (1954) and *The Red Priest* (1956)—he showed himself concerned with the Christian Church as a socially coherent and adhesive force. The Socialism of Western Europe he saw as the secular transformation of the Protestant chrysalis or pupa—the carry-on into civic life of its moral sense and passion. "Socialism," he wrote, "is lay Christianity" (by which he meant lay Protestantism). Catholicism, on the other hand, he regarded as the great conserver of tradition, the greatest educational force for communicating permanent values. There are more Anglicans and Anglo-Catholics in his last novels than Catholic priests, but chapters 32 and 33 of *Self-condemned* offer a sympathetic description of a Canadian Sacred Heart College. A sense of the numinous is not prominent in his writing. Professor Harding, in the novel *Self-condemned*, comes upon it at a stage in his life, but, after a short period of spiritual experience, withdraws from the encounter in fear. *The Childermass*, an earlier novel, deals with the theme of the Last Judgment, though more in the manner of the satirist—a satirist acquainted with Dante's epic—than according to a theological imagination. As the narrator of *Rotting Hill* (a semi-autobiographical fiction), he describes himself as a "non-churchgoing Christian," which is how he appears to have thought of himself.



Yet for all his many-sided interest in things, he knew and observed the limits of art. "A literature at the service of propaganda ceases to be art," he wrote, "it becomes an agent of intoxication and deception." His own writings were never party preachments. He sought to clarify and deepen those issues which practical politicians leave dark. It would be truer to speak of him as a political analyst than as a one-man splinter party. Into the prosaic atmosphere, the platitudinous world of British politics, he brought an intellectual fire which was more continental than Anglo-Saxon. In France he would, like Charles Maurras, presumably have gathered a party about him. In England he remained a lonely independent, a minority intelligence, a political gadfly.

Wyndham Lewis has called himself a "portmanteau-man" ("novelist, painter, sculptor, philosopher, draughtsman, critic, politician, journalist, essayist, pamphleteer"). This Renaissance breadth of activity and acquirement is rare in our increasingly specialised age. It is doubtful if we shall see its like again.

Of the forty volumes he has left behind, much belongs to the literature of causes, the polemic of issues over and done. Yet even today we feel their force in the free-and-easy swing of his prose, its colloquial mastery and dynamic. Not without reason did Eliot describe him as the best journalist of our time. It is, however, chiefly in his novels—in *Tarr*, *The Apes of God*, *The Human Age* (1955) above all—that the finest effects of his style are to be found. Here, with great amassment of means, his satire breaks out in gigantic pyrotechnics, in a vast wide-ranging baroque of ridicule. Geoffrey Grigson has dubbed him master of "the controlled explosion and the steel edge," and those acquainted with the sinister mailed beauty of his paintings and drawings will accept this epithet. Despite the broad disposition of his gifts, his personality was all of a piece.

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# UNLESS YOU BELIEVE

## *The Notion of Justification*

By

H. FRANCIS DAVIS

THERE HAVE been many misunderstandings between Catholics and Protestants arising from their traditional ways of explaining the kind of belief that God wants of man. The Protestant has long been inclined to include the whole of man's response and self-committal to God under the one word "faith." The Catholic has always been more analytical in his theology. Man's response to God has, for the Catholic, been divided into the three theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. So, in theological practice, faith, for the Catholic, has been contrasted with the other two virtues, and has been confined solely or mainly to man's response to God as truth. Faith has for us been the acceptance of God's word. For the Protestant, faith has become an all-inclusive word, and has been assimilated to the other Christian virtues, and fused, even to the point of identification, with hope and love. Both traditions can point to certain scripture passages in their favour. The Catholic analytical way has tended perhaps to be more informative, while the Protestant synthetic way has been more concrete. In practice, Catholics and Protestants have often argued at cross purposes, as each has been tempted to misunderstand the word "faith" as used by the other.

At least since the time of St. Augustine, actual living faith has been recognised as a highly complex state of soul. It is a living self-committal, expressed by St. Augustine in the words, *Credo in Deum*. In fact, he was convinced that it was this living complexity that distinguished *credo in Deum* from both *credo Deo* and *credo Deum*. His words are well known:

If you believe in Him, you believe Him: but it does not follow that he who believes Him, believes in Him. Again, we can say even of His Apostles: we believe Paul; but not: we believe in Paul.

We believe Peter; but not: we believe in Peter. For *to him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reputed to justice* (Rom. iv, 5). What then is believing in Him? It is to love Him in our faith, to choose Him in our faith, to go to Him in our faith, and to be incorporated into His members.<sup>1</sup>

Even St. Thomas recognised the distinction, and wrote:

To believe in God as our end is characteristic of faith informed by charity: this faith thus informed is the beginning of all good works; and to this extent believing is said to be the work of God.<sup>2</sup>

Prat explained that believing in God is resting upon Him as on an unshakable support, taking refuge in Him, tending towards Him.

St. Thomas's words make it clear that faith was never meant to exist divorced from the other two virtues. For faith is the entrusting of the mind to God's word; and all our human relationships must be based upon the mind. "Believing God" should immediately lead us to believe "in God." In real life one postulates the other. How could a person believe God's word of truth in full sincerity without committing himself to Him. Faith, as the Catholic theologian says, without the self-committal of charity, is not saving faith. As St. Thomas puts it elsewhere, faith not only "enlightens the mind," but "also warms the affections, telling us not merely that God is the first cause, but also that He is Saviour, Redeemer, loving, made flesh for us."<sup>3</sup>

The logical conclusion, then, of faith is the total committal expressed in the phrase, *credo in Deum*. "If you believe, you will be saved" means: "if you believe in God," including love and hope.

This committal, every aspect of which is equally the gift of God, none of it a human "achievement," is threefold; and no Christian is a true Christian, living in the grace of God, until this threefold relationship with Him is verified. These aspects are called faith, hope and charity or the theological virtues, as we were saying; and they have been regarded as pre-eminently the God-related virtues since the time of St. Paul himself.

<sup>1</sup> In Jo. Ev., tr. xxix, 6. P.L. 35, 1631. My translation.

<sup>2</sup> In Jo. cap. vi, lect. iii. My translation.

<sup>3</sup> Com. in 2 Cor., ii, lect. iii. tr. by Thomas Gilby, *St. Thomas Aquinas, Theological Texts*, no. 353.

Their God-relatedness can be variously expressed. Thomists say that they all have God in His personal reality as their object. Their relationship to God in each case seems to involve a sort of trust. This may be due to the fact that the other two are built on faith, which is itself a reliance. The trust that is faith is an unconditional adherence to God as the voice of truth—the voice that judges all other voices, the proto-truth.<sup>1</sup> There is a second kind of trust that commits us utterly into God's hands as the sole means and terms of human happiness. This is technically called hope or *elpis*, though probably some Scripture passages may refer to this kind of trust with the word *pistis*. It is this second kind of trust, namely "hope," that corresponds most nearly to the popular meaning of "trust" in English. The third kind of unconditional trust is the self-entrusting and self-giving that is called in the New Testament *agape* or charity. As from God to man, it is self-giving, in the strictest sense. As from man to God, it is a self-giving which, since we already belong to God, is more in the nature of a self-entrusting or a self-surrender to His will. It differs from hope in so far as it abandons to God's will all our interests, even our own happiness. It does not, however, contradict hope, since faith tells us that our happiness is God's will for us, and hope our obligation. We perhaps only know through faith that the miracle of *agape* is in some degree possible to fallen man, under the influence of God's grace.

The followers of the Reformation seem normally to have included all man's essential relationship with God in the word *pistis* or faith, with the frequent result, it seems to the Catholic, of confusing the three theological virtues, and making of love and hope the essence of faith. Dr. Woolcombe has suggested that faith was originally a structure-word, involving many constituent elements, as can be seen from its varying contexts. Though this be admitted, human weakness demands explicit recognition of the constituent parts of that structure. The exclusive use of the word "faith" to express all the essential aspects of the Christian attitude to the God that reveals Himself has led in some circles paradoxically to a weakening of the truth-aspect of living faith in favour of its love and hope aspects.

Thus Anders Nygren defines faith as "unconditional trust in

<sup>1</sup> Expressed simply in the catechism: "who can neither deceive, nor be deceived."

the loving will of God."<sup>1</sup> He describes Luther's idea of faith in these words: "In this way Luther can speak of faith as implying nothing else than an *assensus*, a *yea* to 'God's work and promise,' but this *yea* is at the same time an expression of the very highest trust, which is to say, an expression of man's having been subdued by the will of God."<sup>2</sup> Even more strikingly, in *Agape and Eros*, he writes:

Faith includes in itself the whole devotion of love, while emphasising that it has the character of a response, that it is reciprocated love. Faith is love towards God, but a love of which the keynote is receptivity, not spontaneity.<sup>3</sup>

Emil Brunner writes: "Faith is self-surrender, willing submission. Unbelief is the disobedience of the man who will not renounce his independence."<sup>4</sup>

All this is, of course, an excellent statement of man's proper attitude towards God, but it is rather what St. Augustine and St. Thomas would call charity than what they would call faith.

The matter is more complicated, from the ecumenical point of view, by the frequently-expressed Protestant opinion that Catholics have an inferior concept of hope and charity, which prevents these virtues from being included in what the former regard as true, living, faith. Catholic hope, they say, rests on human merits; and Catholic charity, they claim, is a high form of Platonic *eros*, motivated by sublimated self-interest. I suggest that they are here assuming more agreement than really exists among either Catholics or Protestants as regards the true understanding of these virtues. Can one really say that there is a Catholic and Protestant view, for instance, on the meaning of disinterested love? At least this must be said from a Catholic point of view. Hope rests *ultimately* solely on Christ's merits. Charity, everyone agrees, is pure love of God for His own sake, with a correspondingly "divine" love for our neighbour. No one can pretend that any theology or philosophy as to the precise degree of selflessness this involves would be universally accepted. Whatever explanation is accepted, the Catholic theologian would always

<sup>1</sup> Gustav Aulén, *The Faith of the Christian Church*, 328.

<sup>2</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 75

<sup>3</sup> *Agape and Eros*, tr. Philip S. Watson, 1953, 127. Dr. Nygren is here giving his interpretation of St. Paul.

<sup>4</sup> *Revelation and Reason*, tr. Olive Wyon, 1947, 35.

claim that, of the three virtues, charity is the most selfless, and involves a deeper dependence on God than the other two without charity. All three virtues are gifts of God, "but the greatest of these is charity."

In a good Christian life, the three virtues are inseparable. Yet they represent different attitudes. Faith, as contrasted with the other two, is our utter committal of ourselves to God as to our guiding light. Since we must begin by guidance, St. Ignatius of Antioch says that faith is the beginning, and love the end. This basic character of faith is well expressed by the Jesuit, De Caussade:

The soul, enlightened by faith, judges of things in a very different way to those who, having only the standard of the senses by which to measure them, ignore the inestimable treasure they contain. The soul that recognises the will of God in every smallest event, and also in those that are most distressing and direful, receives all with equal joy, pleasure and respect.<sup>1</sup> Faith [he added] changes the face of the earth: by it the heart is raised, entranced, and becomes conversant with heavenly things. Faith is our light in this life. By it we possess the truth without seeing it; we touch what we cannot feel, and see what is not evident to the senses. By it we view the world as though it did not exist. It is the key of the treasure house, the key of the abyss of the science of God. It is faith that teaches us the hollowness of created things: by it God reveals and manifests Himself in all things. By faith the veil is torn aside to reveal eternal truth.<sup>2</sup>

This faith is of little value until it is joined to the two sister virtues. Only then is it truly logical. Belief that God is what He has revealed Himself to be naturally leads to hopeful trust in His love and Christ's merits. This, in turn, should lead to the entire self-surrender of love to God's will.

The distinctive importance of each theological virtue and their mutual interdependence in the true Christian life are illustrated by St. John of the Cross with his metaphor of the livery of three colours—white, green and purple—which enables the soul to travel under the protection of its divine lover, and be safeguarded from its enemies.

(The) white garment of faith was worn by the soul on its going forth from this night, when, walking in interior afflictions and

<sup>1</sup> De Caussade, *Abandonment to Divine Providence*, 17.

<sup>2</sup> *op. cit.*, 16.



darkness . . . it receives no aid, in the form of light, from its understanding. By words of thy lips I kept hard ways. . . . Next, over this white tunic of faith the soul now puts on the second colour, which is a green vestment. . . . This green colour of living hope in God gives the soul such ardour and courage and aspiration to the things of eternal life that, by comparison with what it hopes for therein, all things of the world seem to it to be, as in truth they are, dry and faded and dead, and nothing worth. . . . Over the white and green vestments, as the crown and perfection of this disguise and livery, the soul now puts on the third colour, which is a splendid garment of purple. . . . This not only adds grace to the other two colours, but causes the soul to rise to so lofty a point that it is brought nearer to God.<sup>1</sup>

St. Bernard, and ancient writers generally, tell us that faith needs charity to be living faith, to be that faith that truly binds God to the soul. It is possible without *agape* still to retain a certain belief in God's word: but, though it be a faith sufficient to move mountains, it will not avail until charity returns. The faith that accepts God and His Christ and Christ's mystical Body, together with our adopted sonship and membership of that Body, forms a living whole with the hope and love of children. "If you really believed," it is sometimes said, "you would not fail to put trust in God." Trust in the heart and committal of our whole self should follow upon belief in the mind. Believe God, and you will believe in Him.

A strong reason for maintaining the distinction between faith, hope and love, even where they are actually joined in justifying or "informed" faith, is to ensure the preservation of the distinctive meaning and value of faith. Where this value is confused with hope, faith's relationship to God's word of truth is weakened. It easily becomes a vague trust that all is well. In reality, there should be nothing vague about Christian truth, even though it includes mysteries beyond human comprehension. Christian truth is neither vague nor abstract. Cullmann is one of those that have clearly put before us how God's revelation to man has been in terms of actual time and events. Moses and the prophets, and last of all Jesus Christ, were sent by God at datable moments of history. The tendency of Bultmann's theology to minimise the importance of Christ's datable life and death, in favour of what some writers call His existential-historical reality to each

<sup>1</sup> *The Dark Night of the Soul*, II, 21, Works, tr. Allison Peers, I. 471-3.



of us each day of our lives, removes his theology from traditional Christianity. In spite of his insistence on the historical character of Christianity, the historicity of Christ's life and death on earth becomes for him almost as irrelevant as it would have been for Aristotle or Plato or Hegel.

The Christian faith is a hearing of the voice of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and His Son, Jesus Christ, through whom His Father spoke, during the short time He was in this world; and through whose life and death, He revealed Himself. For this reason, the Christian creed is not satisfied to say merely: "I believe in Jesus Christ." We consider it necessary to add a series of objective-historical statements to make it clear that our faith understands Him as one whose appearance in datable history was all-important for our redemption: "born of the Virgin Mary, who suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried," and so forth. The creed might almost have been written as a faith-protest against some second-century Bultmann. This Jesus who appeared on earth some nineteen centuries ago is the One in whom we place our hope, out of love for whom we leave all things to follow Him. It is this kind of faith, and this only, upon which all distinctively Christian response to God is based.

Christian, like Jewish, faith has never been merely a vague abandonment of oneself to the Supreme Being, with a general recognition of one's sinfulness and a confidence that God will forgive. The Christian knows Christ and His heavenly Father through the Holy Spirit in His Church; for which reason the creed continues: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church." It is through the Holy Ghost that the meaning of Christ's proclamation, the meaning of the Christian gospel, has come down to us. Belief in the Holy Ghost implies not only acceptance of God and His Son and their Spirit, but belief in the action of that Spirit within the Church.

The above account of faith, it will be seen, does not accept Martin Buber's suggestion that there are two kinds of faith, one of which is belief in a truth and the other faith in a person. Faith has two objects. It is a way of reaching truth through trust in the ultimate person who is Truth. For, in the supreme Truth, "person" is no longer distinct from "thing" nor from "truth." I have no doubt that a bogus faith is conceivable, which would be

nothing more than the acceptance of certain unproved and personally unguaranteed propositions, as though they were passwords to the kingdom. But such faith would be bogus, since it could not truly command inner confidence. There is something like this when the followers of a school of thought—it sometimes happens to theologians—bind themselves uncompromisingly to a sort of party-line to defend the opinions of their group, even where the word of God leaves the question open. It is the word of God only, which came to us in Christ and the prophets at certain points of time and place, and is preserved in the living Church, which God's gift of faith enables us to accept in our hearts today, that remains the object and basis of Christianity. And it is accepted as the word of God, the Supreme Truth. Those who guiltily refuse that word, when it reaches them, would be classed by Our Lord among those who cannot hear His voice, because they are not of God.

Christianity has always meant this, or it has meant nothing. It is surrender to God as the supreme truth, together with the recognition of Him where He has broken through into our world, together with the acceptance of His judgment on our sin, and surrender of ourselves and lives to His service.

## REVIEWS

### THE HEART IN HIDING

*Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, Second Edition. Revised and enlarged. Edited with notes and an introduction by Claude Collier Abbott (Oxford University Press 50s).

THE SECOND EDITION of *Further Letters* serves a useful purpose by including a block of new material. But it cannot be said that it makes a very attractive book. The newly discovered letters to family and friends, comprising as they do a third of the book, tend to upset its balance like a python's undigested meal. In the great Bridges and Dixon volumes, which we owe also to the devoted labours of Professor Abbott, you could open any page at some lapidary sentence that provoked you to read on and find unflinching satisfaction. *Literature-and-Life*, at a very high conversational standard, was the unifying thread. So also it was in the Patmore correspondence on which the first edition of *Further Letters* pivoted. Even here, however, there was a feeling that the letters relegated to "miscellaneous" at the beginning

and to appendixes at the end, as well as the many-sided correspondence with Baillie, needed a more informative setting. With the second edition that feeling has become a certainty. For the centre of balance has shifted completely from literature-and-life to family life—but without any corresponding comment or explanation by the editor.

Hopkins's letters to his family (including seventy to his mother) and family friends are potentially of high biographical interest; but they do positively call for detailed information about persons and places; they call also for an arrangement which will enlighten, instead of obscuring, what was actually going on in Hopkins's life. Their central, though by no means their only, point of interest is the period of Hopkins's conversion and reception by Newman. The crucial and agonising correspondence with his parents on this issue is here sandwiched between his lively and interesting account of the Devonshire relations at one end and a scrappy summary of Oxford news at the other. The effect, though shocking, is quite baffling. What is it all about? To piece the story together, one has to skip backwards and forwards to five or six different places in the "miscellaneous" and the appendixes—as well as outside the letters to the relevant places in *Journals* and *Poems* which are not cited by the editor. It would be unfair to blame the devoted editor for not including masses of biographical information in a book already filled to capacity. Still, the fact must be stated. It would have been better in some ways if publication of the new material had been deferred till it could be adequately annotated.

On the other hand it is a great boon to have these things in print, instead of in manuscript in the Bodleian, and printed with the meticulous accuracy which is the hall-mark of Professor Abbott's work. Hopkins's letters to his mother run from the first days at Oxford to the last illness in Ireland. Although it is true that relations could never be quite the same after his conversion, yet they do bring out the more human and "small-boyish," but no less genuine, side of his personality. And, from a practical point of view, they throw innumerable points of light on his movements in the Society, the yearly and daily course of his life in it, and even on his private spiritual experiences. There is the avowal, for instance, of the times when he has known with absolute certainty that his prayers have been heard. And there are a good many references to fellow-Jesuits which show (as perhaps he was anxious they should show) that "in all removes I can / Kind love both give and get." There are many sidelights of this kind which manage to win their way to "my heart in hiding," and help to form a living picture of what, if we had only the other letters to go on, might seem a rather dull and featureless expanse.

CHRISTOPHER DEVLIN

## THE CONTEMPORARY NOVEL

*The Vanishing Hero*, by Sean O'Faolain (Eyre and Spottiswoode 21s).

MR. SEAN O'FAOLAIN'S main thesis in these studies of certain writers of the Twenties is the disappearance from the modern novel of the traditional hero. This is at best an arguable point, and though Mr. O'Faolain, who has a persuasive way with him, exerts all his not inconsiderable talents as an advocate to prove his case, what he has to say in pure criticism of the authors under review remains perhaps the most valuable part of the book. He writes with that mordant sympathy which is the mark of a good critic, and with unfailing objectivity. What could be a better description, for instance, of the earlier Waugh than this: "he writes [of the young people of his decade] not so much with paternal bitterness as with *brotherly exasperation*." No two words could more aptly sum up that writer's attitude towards his fellow-man. No less felicitous is he when he comes to deal with Mr. Graham Greene, although he admits to having grown "a trifle weary over the years" both with what he says and how he says it. Moreover, as he sees it, Mr. Greene, travelling precariously along the borderline between the spiritual and the corrupt is apt too frequently to overbalance on the wrong side. Nevertheless his best work, such as *The Power and the Glory*, with its blend of imagination and realism should be read as "a sort of poetry." In this connection Mauriac is mentioned, but more could have been made of that writer's influence, not only on Mr. Graham Greene himself, but through him on the English novel in general. Ernest Hemingway on the other hand is seen as an episodic writer, a sort of camera's eye glimpsing an event, rather than a series of events taking place within a limited period of time with characters apposite only to that event and having neither past nor future outside of it. In fact, as Mr. O'Faolain goes on to point out truly, nothing could have been less apt than the quotation chosen to head *For Whom the Bell Tolls*—"No man is an island, entire of itself," for, as he says, "All his [Hemingway's] men are islands."

It is a tribute to Mr. O'Faolain's objective treatment that when he comes to Huxley, Elizabeth Bowen and Joyce, writers against whom as a Catholic and an Irishman he might have been expected to betray a measure of bias, he does nothing of the sort. All come in for the same clear-headed, sometimes ruthless but generally understanding dissection. It may well be true that Stephen Dedalus is as important a symbolic figure as Mr. O'Faolain would have us believe: that he is the prototype and bell-wether of all the hyper-sensitive, frustrated young men and women of the 'twenties and 'thirties who were in revolt against they knew not what. But there are others to whom he remains an outlandish phenomenon with more power to repel them

than to attract, outside the bounds of symbolism or even of common recognition. And the same for many can be said of Joyce himself. Perhaps it is, as is here suggested, that we do not know enough of the artist, of his way of looking at things, of his ambience, of his very nature. Perhaps it is that even when we know all those things they still appear so alien as to be meaningless. The question mark remains.

One reflection arises from a perusal of these essays: that it is a pity that more people, especially politicians, do not read contemporary novels. They would learn a lot about the minds and conditions of their fellow-men that would be of use to them.

JOHN MCEWEN

### POET OF HOPE

*Péguy*, by Alexander Dru (Harvill Press 15s).

*The Holy Innocents, and other Poems*, by Charles Péguy. Translated by Pansy Pakenham. Foreword by Alexander Dru (Harvill Press 15s).

A GREAT NUMBER of young men gathered together in a square in Budapest. They congregated round about a monument of Alexander Petoefi and, suddenly standing to attention, they sang the oath sired by the patriot poet of Hungary: "Never again shall we be slaves; we defy the tyrant by uttering the words: *Liberty or Death*." Written by Petoefi a hundred years ago these words heralded the recent uprising and the martyrdom of the Hungarians; the date 23 October 1956 was boldly chalked below the feet of the poet's image. Péguy's verse is ardent as Petoefi's, it resembles the virtue of *Hope* which virtue he describes in "The Mystery of the Holy Innocents," for like Hope his work "Est chargé de faire naître." Mr. Alexander Dru forcibly depicts the French poet as a *Maker*, as a man who justly claimed that through him would burgeon a Catholic renaissance.

Mr. Dru records the difficulty that Mr. Day Lewis has to conceive that verse can induce action, and the latter's nonacceptance of Charles Williams's view that lines of poetry can "Awaken in us a sense that we are capable of love and sacrifice." In a fine chapter entitled "The New Language" Mr. Dru clarifies the concept of Coleridge, of Kierkegaard, of Shelley and Pascal that the nature of imagination is essentially *vital* and he shows the reader that Péguy's "passionate flow of poetry" communicates the life of grace and vision. Mr. Dru also shows the ripening of Péguy's socialism which the poet saw as effecting man's temporal good, and again the process of Péguy's *approfondissement* in the Christian faith which *credo* should effect man's spiritual good.



The part played in the evolution of Péguy's political vision by the Dreyfus case, the unexpected welling up of poetry out of Péguy's prose, an outspring that surprised the delighted Péguy, these matters make exciting reading and one more debt of gratitude is due to Mr. Alexander Dru from those he has already benefited by his writings. How fortunate, for such as cannot plunge into Péguy's original creation that, simultaneous with the biography of the poet by Mr. Alexander Dru, Lady Pansy Pakenham should present her faithful and rhythmical translation of *The Holy Innocents and Other Poems*, with a foreword by Mr. Dru. The power of the French stanzas pulse through her rendering of the splendid Chartres poems; the selfless translator has mirrored them. The *newness*, the innocent vernal quality of "The Holy Innocents" comes undefaced into the English version as, for example, the following lines:—

I am, God says, Lord of the Three Virtues.  
Faith is a great tree, an ash rooted in the heart of France,  
And under the wings of that tree, Charity, my daughter Charity  
Shelters all the distress of the world.  
And my little hope is only that little promise of a bud which  
Shows itself at the very beginning of April.

Like Psichari, the lover of glory, Péguy said on almost the last page he wrote, "We are entering an unknown domain, the domain of joy. A hundred times more strange than the kingdom of sorrow. A hundred times more profound, I believe, and a hundred times more fertile."

VIOLET CLIFTON

#### A PRESBYTERIAN DIAGNOSIS

*Only One Way Left*, by George F. MacLeod, M.C., D.D. (Iona Community Publishing Department 10s 6d).

THOUGH some of Sir George MacLeod's observations, in this welcome though unequal book, carry a Presbyterian chill, many others deserve an honoured place in the treasury of Catholic thought. Like so many others, Dr. MacLeod tries to link the Church of Scotland with the Catholic tradition by representing the Reformation as a return to the integral faith of the Celtic Church. He offers, however, no evidence to justify this thesis, and makes his case even more implausible by eagerly inventing a non-sacramental, mock-liturgical substitute for Sunday Mass along with an ersatz confessional in which there is no place for sacramental absolution. Yet the distinguished author is vividly aware of the need for "the recovery of the Confessional." In a striking passage he admits that Presbyterians are "by some omission retaining sins in a multitude of souls," and that "hundreds are in hospital



today, thousands in greyness, because we have not adequately presented to them in living present colours the great High Priest of our forgiveness."

While the author's sincerity shines out from every page, he is clearly a long way from having really convinced himself of all of his own opinions. Still a prisoner of Presbyterianism, the founder and leader of the Iona Community is too profoundly Christian to feel really at home within the Church of Scotland. Many of the causes he advocates (witness his eloquent plea for a socially conscious faith) are profoundly Catholic and traditional. Yet if Dr. MacLeod has been influenced by Catholic crusading, he is never a plagiarist, though contact with the mind of the Church has helped him to crystallise his own thoughts concerning the social implications of the Christian faith. He sets forth his ideas with refreshing vigour. "The ultimate worship of God," he says, "is what we do in the realm of service or obedience in the market place. . . . We are, in what we write *by our life together*, the only 'Epistles' that men outside now read."

It is therefore all the more regrettable that in practice this all boils down to admiration for Nye Bevan, and the conviction that "we have in our Constitution . . . the only way of going left." Like so many continental *progressistes*, Dr. MacLeod allows his heart to run away with his head. He resembles them also in his total failure to appreciate the necessity of reforming our social institutions on corporative lines, as the only means whereby planning can be reconciled with freedom.

He speaks of Catholic sociologists rubbing their hands in expectation of democracy's collapse, as though self-government were anathema to the Catholic mind. What he does not understand is that, with the best will in the world, it is quite impossible adequately to safeguard human freedom by parliamentary means alone; and that however successful Christian politicians, whether Protestant or Catholic, may be in permeating the apparatus of the democratic state, unless their intervention results in strengthening the family and in the development of a corporative economic order, the Socialist, totalitarian state will sooner or later, as in Russia, extinguish the last vestiges of freedom. He has not understood that the corporative social order based on a multiplicity of self-governing vocational groups, as recommended by the Church, is the antithesis of the Corporate or totalitarian state, and at the same time the only feasible means of realising in practice the aspirations of the multitude to truly representative government. Yet in view of the number of Catholic politicians and sociologists who prefer to ignore the essential social message of the Church for our epoch, Dr. MacLeod's well-meaning but immature social theorising is but another reminder that the Catholic's first responsibility is to

remove the beam from his own eye. Moreover, if Dr. MacLeod's solutions are unrealistic and unacceptable, he has nevertheless written a book that is not only interesting and readable, but also important if only because of the vividness and urgency with which he poses the problems.

HAMISH FRASER

### LORD RUSSELL'S MEMORIES

*Portraits from Memory, and other Essays*, by Bertrand Russell (Allen and Unwin 16s).

THIS MÉLANGE in spite of some grim prophecy is full of clear and interesting reading. Some pages read as though brains were smeared into the ink. There are streaks of autobiography which give a sense of crystal truth. There are some amusing sketches in biography of others—Cambridge Dons and memorised snapshots of Shaw, Wells, Conrad, Santayana, Whitehead, the Webbs and D. H. Lawrence. They read like a kind of purged Lytton Strachey, arrowy but unpoisoned. Essays of Philosophy, Clear Thinking, History and Happiness would add to any undergraduate's education. The climax is the result of the author's visits to Russia and China and his agonised reaction from Communism.

In dealing with the Transvaal tragedy he mistakes Sir William Butler, the wise humane Irish General, who was dismissed for his desire to keep peace with the Boers, for General Buller—an unfortunate mistake.

The Russell home was pious, priggish but pregnant with Liberalism. Cambridge offered young Russell bewildering freedom. He found he was allowed to choose his philosophers just as others chose their sports. He chose Hegel and Plato before abandoning both in time. His simile showing up Hegel is delightful. He compares the Hegelian attitude to the approach of a bus blurred in a thick London fog.

His collection of Odd Cambridge Dons beats any similar collection served up lately in Memoirs. One Fellow always attacked with a red-hot poker when a guest sneezed. Obviously he was trying to singe the microbes spattered in the air. Otherwise he was charming. Russell's mathematical coach "went mad but none of his pupils noticed it."

On a lower level of oddity came two Snob-Dons who were rivals for securing the Empress Frederick to lunch. It need not be added that Oscar Browning was one. The undergraduates by buying up votes secured him second place in a beauty competition. Though he was the ugliest of Dons he turned the tables by boasting of his success! The Cambridge High Tables were frequented still by the ludicrous, the incompetent and even the insane—but independence of character consequently flourished.

It is interesting to learn that Alfred Whitehead "as a young man was all but converted to Roman Catholicism by the influence of Cardinal Newman." His bed-book was Sarpi's *History of the Council of Trent*. This unusual philosopher related the Hussite heresy to the Bohemian silver mines. Elsewhere we learn that England's maritime greatness was due to a change in the habits of herrings and that on four occasions drought in Arabia has caused a wave of Semitic conquest. These are the oddities of history.

The pith of Lord Russell's book is his trenchant summary of Communism and the evils of the time in language which can be understood by the wise as well as by the people. "In the modern world there are clever men in laboratories and fools in power." He warns us of the consequences with Orwellian magnitude of imagination. This is a book of the first academic rank, intensely sincere and deeply concerned with the future of humanity.

SHANE LESLIE

## SHORTER NOTICES

*A Book of Family Prayers*, by H. McEvoy, S.J. (Oliver and Boyd 5s).  
*Praying the Psalms*, by R. J. Foster (Birchley Hall Press 7s 6d).

FR. MCEVOY aims at fostering the practice of a family's "praying together," and the idea is kept before us in, e.g., the correct translation of the *Sub tuum praesidium*: "We come together": "We fly to thy protection," the usual translation, misses the point. Variety is ensured by the choice of different prayers for each day of the week, finding them in many rituals or antiphonaries, and preferring the simple to the florid (he mostly uses, instead of Thee and Thou, Your and You); and he includes prayers meant to supernaturalise what might be taken for granted, e.g., the Friday abstinence or silver or golden Wedding-feasts. One regret—in the Compline hymn he writes "According to Thy clemency," a correct translation of our *Pro tua clementia*, but this is the colourless emendation of the original *solita*: "Through Thine unfailing clemency" would have done, though the last word is unfamiliar. We still need a book where no word would be a "dead" patch in a sentence, even for the least educated. The pages introducing morning and evening prayers are perfect; and, with Archbishop Godfrey, we hope that each house will have its little shrine in the room where the prayers are said in common. Fr. Foster, whose parents became converts, learnt to love the Psalms in childhood which, alas, few "cradle Catholics" do. So he adapts his translation from the Hebrew, though retaining some archaic words (e.g., "clad" for "clothed"); his brief notes are mostly

helpful, though we do not think that, e.g., *God's "tent"* suggests a *frail* shelter: in a short introduction he explains the usual distich arrangement of Hebrew poetry, and so, we wish he had "inset" the second line of each distich. But will Catholics, accustomed (if to anything) to the Vulgate and the Douai, take to this translation, unusual even to an Anglican? But we are grateful for anything which may make the inexhaustible riches of these hymns better appreciated.

*Catholic Social Thought*. An international symposium edited by the Rev. R. Cirillo (Aquilina, Malta 15s).

*A Co-operative Approach to Socialism*, by Paul Derrick (Socialist Christian League 2s).

THERE IS MORE than a dash of courage about the recent publication in Malta of an international symposium on *Catholic Social Thought*. Edited by Fr. R. Cirillo, a priest-lecturer in economics at Malta's Royal University, the book contains a well-selected array of well-written and stimulating essays in Catholic social thinking. Here, in all probability, is the last essay—on "The Family in Social Evolution"—written by the distinguished Belgian Jesuit, Père Valere Fallon. Here also is a short and typically trenchant piece on "The Social Problem in Our Time" by His Lordship the Bishop of Cork. There is a great deal else to be found in a series of essays which range from a useful discussion of the concept of the national income to a Catholic angle on strikes and lock-outs. This book deserves success not only for the quality of its contents, but for the courage which so obviously has gone into its production.

It is difficult for this reviewer to see how there can be such a thing as a co-operative approach to Socialism, for the latter, one would have thought, must, of its essence, rule out any kind of genuine co-operation. At first sight Mr. Paul Derrick's pamphlet appears to represent a contradiction in terms; and if the reply is made that here Socialism stands for social ownership, one can only plead with the author to be more careful in his selection of terms.

None of this means that the pamphlet is not worth reading. On the contrary, it deserves consideration as does much that Mr. Derrick writes, but the reader should be warned against the kind of confusion noted above.

*Worship and Work*, by Colman J. Barry, O.S.B. (St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota n.p.).

IN 1956 St. John's Abbey, Minnesota, celebrated its first centenary. Its story, as the monk-author points out, is not only an evidence of the Benedictine revival in modern times, but also a manifestation of the vitality of the Catholic Church on the frontier and in general

American society during the period of its growth and maturity. This monumental history of 447 pages contains 186 illustrations, several maps and an exhaustive appendix. Founded from St. Vincent's Abbey, Pennsylvania in 1856 (which had been established by a few German monks from the Abbey of Wetten, Bavaria, in 1846), St. John's has forged ahead both in numbers and in apostolic works of all kinds. No task has been refused when there were the men available to undertake it. Foundations have been made at six places in the United States; also in Japan, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Mexico. The Apostolic Vicariate of the Bahamas is staffed by monks of St. John's Abbey. They have been pioneers in education and in the liturgical apostolate. The ultra-modern abbey church now being erected shows that they keep abreast of the times.

*They Did Not Pass By: The Story of the Early Pioneers of Nursing*, by Denis G. Murphy (Longmans 10s 6d).

THE ARCHBISHOP OF BIRMINGHAM in his Foreword recommends this book because "it tells the story of how much Catholics have done, precisely because they were Catholics, towards making the nursing profession the wonderfully widely-ranged thing that it is." In sixteen chapters Mr. Murphy deals with most aspects of the Church's achievement. He starts with the Hospital Nurse who in the course of centuries evolved out of the Augustinian Nuns at Paris, and the Beguines and Beghards in the Netherlands. Our present-day male nurses can look back to St. John of God as their example. Mental nursing had its origins in the medieval "colony" at Gheel, while the more recently founded Little Sisters of the Poor were the virtual foundresses of house-to-house nursing. The Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem were the pioneers of hospital management. St. Camillus of Lellis showed how great was the need for military nurses. So in the course of 208 pages we are made to realise the Catholic tradition on which all Christian nursing is based. This little book should be read by every nurse—male or female.

*Portrait of Pius XII*, by Nazareno Padellaro (Dent 25s).

PIO NONO had to wait until a few years ago for the first competent study of his life in English, whereas there are several studies of the present Holy Father to be found in the lists of English publishers, to which the present work, in Michael Derrick's translation, is a worthy addition. The author, who holds an educational post at Rome, has an eye on anti-Catholic writings about the Pope such as those of the Nazi propagandist, Harder, and the hostile remarks in Ciano's diaries, to which he provides a useful antidote. Some of his omissions are a



cause of disappointment, as when he is found to have passed over in silence the whole episode of the Italian adventure in Croatia and the condemnation by Pius XII (in *Mystici Corporis*) of attempts at forcible conversion. One also misses a treatment of the work of the Pope for the liturgical revival. The author's point of view is strictly Italian, as will be seen by his remarks about Franco's policy in the war-years, and by the way he treats the phenomenon of Modernism. One could have wished that the translator had made some adaptations of his text for the English reader.

*Louis XV*, by G. P. Gooch (Longmans 25s).

PROFESSOR GOOCH has managed to pack a wealth of information into his short life of Louis XV, but so skilfully does he present it that at no time is the reader in danger of mental indigestion. By carefully chosen extracts from contemporary diaries he not only recreates the atmosphere of the Court, but also the movement of public opinion during the reign. Louis XV stands condemned not because he was a "bad" king, which in many ways he was not, but because he obstinately refused to be a "ruler." Shrewd, benevolent, and completely lacking in both vindictiveness and military ambition, he possessed all but one of the qualities which France required in her ruler if she was to recover her strength and wealth squandered in the unsuccessful wars of Louis XIV. But all these sterling qualities were brought to naught by his inability to overcome his disinclination to shoulder his responsibilities as the ruler of an absolute monarchy. Content to reign and refusing to rule, he sought escape from his responsibilities in the arms of his favourites, leaving the work of government to ministers often less informed and competent than himself.

*In Silence I Speak: Cardinal Mindszenty and Hungary's "New Order,"* by George N. Schuster (Gollancz 21s).

THE EVENTS of November 1956 have, by a curious twist, rendered this book, so "topical" as one might have expected, curiously out of date. The elemental heroism of the Hungarian people had blazed with such dazzling brightness that any attempt to analyse the situation in Hungary during the preceding years becomes a pale academic exercise. Reading the book is like looking at an old-fashioned silent film, jerky and pock-marked, flat, dated and unconvincing. This is not to belittle the work of Dr. Schuster. It is merely some measure of the way in which events in Hungary have outstripped all expectation. The book draws a picture of a society being gradually throttled. But to read a sentence such as: "In all truth the instruments of control over which the Party disposed seemed likely to be able to crush every



vestige of potential opposition" after hearing accounts of the lengths to which resistance has in fact gone is to be reminded that history books can never do justice to history.

The book, then, gives us some account of the Communist attempt to capture the soul of Hungary, and suggests some degree of resistance to that attempt. It nowhere leads us to expect that a nation would dedicate itself with cold courage to the elimination of its hated masters if not by force then by an even more stupendous act of heroism—the refusal to collaborate at all with the hated régime, even if that refusal meant the slow starvation of an entire nation. But for all that we should read the book. It may serve to remind us in the years to come of the greatness of a people who have risen beyond despair, beyond hope to a vision of true immortality.

*Black Gowns and Redskins*, edited by Edna Kenton (Longmans 25s).

THIS is a much more scholarly book than the series "Pioneer Priests (and Laymen) of North America" which appeared nearly fifty years ago, but not nearly so interesting, perhaps because the editor attempts too much. Her extracts from the *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents* are well made and the translations run smoothly, but the field covered (from the first Jesuit mission to the Indians in 1613 to the years that followed the expulsion of the Jesuits from French dominions in 1763) is really too vast for a book of less than 600 pages.

Historians and non-historians alike will profitably read the excellent Preface and equally excellent Introduction; the non-historian could do with similar prefaces and introductions before each section and gladly dispense with the learned footnotes; but whoever reads these narratives of the lives and deaths of Jogues, Brébeuf, Marquette and a score of others will for a few hours at least be overwhelmed by the conviction that his own life is all too empty of the inspiration and courage which made their lives so full.

*The Biology of the Spirit*, by Edmund W. Sinnott (Gollancz 16s).

"TRY AS HE WILL," writes Dr. Sinnott, "the biologist is bound to confront metaphysical problems"—if he but attend to the goal-seeking aspects of living organisms. This book is especially valuable for the doubt it must sow in all reflective minds on the possibility of any mere chemico-physical explanation of anything that lives. Examining first the extremely complex activities of organisms very low down in the hierarchy of life, Dr. Sinnott finds himself, by a process of thought that is not in the least arbitrary, putting questions about mind, soul, spirit, values, God. As he himself says, people of various faiths and philosophies will find many points of disagreement with him. But there is in his book a healthy enthusiastic wonder at the problems

that biology poses, and the conclusions one might have to accept if one faces them, that is worth far more than any ammunition one might hope to find in it to confirm one's own particular philosophical or religious position. At times he seems to see spirit as a product of organic life: at times—and this seems nearer to his real thought—as manifesting the same kind of purposeful activity at a higher level. And he does suggest: "Perhaps the material part of man is the product of the soul." That is not far from—if it be not identical with—the thought of Aristotle.

*Personality and Group Relations in Industry*, by Michael P. Fogarty (Longmans 30s).

**B**EFORE WRITING this text-book for students of industrial sociology and psychology Professor Fogarty seems to have made up his mind in advance that no one would be likely to take it off a library shelf except the specialists for whom it would be semi-compulsory reading. This is a pity, for much of what the author has to say is of general interest and, but for his rather irritating style, might have reached a wider audience. As it is, the man in the street knows little or nothing concerning the relatively new science of industrial management; indeed, few even among industrialists in Britain appear to take it seriously. Yet in a country so highly industrialised as ours, interest in its findings must extend far beyond the ranks of budding personnel managers and Coal Board officials. It should indeed be a matter of public concern that there has been so little initiative by British industrialists in view of the unlimited scope that appears to exist for modifying the constitution of large-scale enterprise.

Catholics too often dismiss the problems of modern industry with a distributist shrug and a renewed vote of doctrinaire confidence in profit-sharing and co-partnership as the panacea for all industrial ills. Yet the root cause of most industrial unrest is the individual's difficulty in integrating himself within the industrial environment. Professor Fogarty believes that the solution consists in more experiment along the lines already undertaken by the Glacier Metal and Renold Chain companies.

*Elizabethan Quintet*, by Denis Meadows (Longmans 15s).

*The Life of Thomas Cranmer*, by Theodore Maynard (Staples 18s).

**T**HE QUINTET consists somewhat fortuitously of: "Sir Francis Walsingham, the English Machiavelli"; "Robert Persons, the seditious Jesuit"; "John Dee, the Queen's Astrologer"; "Mary Frith, the Roaring Girl," and "Sir John Harington, the Merry Poet." Although he is very colloquial, slangy, and too prone to find simplified parallels and modern instances, Mr. Meadows writes with knowledge

and with an understanding for which he has had special opportunities. His portrait of the fanatical Calvinist, eager to make Elizabeth go to war on behalf of "his brethren in Christ," full of murderous hatred for the Queen of Scots, is really excellent, and Mr. Meadows demonstrates that if there ever was anybody who held that the end justifies the means and acted upon that maxim it was the Principal Secretary of Queen Elizabeth. The account of Fr. Persons, "the Hispaniolated Englishman," which begins and ends with a plea for an adequate biography in which the unpublished material "in the archives of the English Jesuits" will be used, is a good correlative to that of Walsingham.

An alchemist was inevitably an astrologer, and although Dr. John Dee was a mathematician and an astronomer so competent as to be able to correct the Julian Kalendar more closely than Gregory XIII's advisers, he was, throughout his long life, pursued by the imputation of sorcerer and conjurer and "invocator of divels." Like Sir John Harington, he was, fortunately for him, the protégé of the Queen. These two essays are less substantial but quite entertaining; the fifth is merely a make-weight.

This compilation by the late Theodore Maynard is just another "unspecialised book for the general (American) public." In a characteristic preface he apportions his approbation between A. F. Pollard, Hilaire Belloc and Fr. Philip Hughes.

*Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting*, by Rudolf Bultmann; translated by R. H. Fuller (Thames and Hudson 188s).

BULTMANN, one of the most influential forces in contemporary Protestant thought, here studies in succession the thought of the Old Testament and of Judaism, Greek and Hellenistic thought, and primitive Christianity. This book is a strange blend of truth and error, not surprisingly since Bultmann is on the one hand intelligent and erudite and, on the other, a man who, rejecting as "myth" nine-tenths of the Gospel and the Creed, believes himself to be a Christian because he finds Heidegger anticipated by St. Paul. His account of the various complexes of thought he examines is both brilliant and curiously oversimplified. For him all ideas have clear, hard edges; he sometimes forgets that tensions exist not only between different systems but also within all great systems of thought. He is an extremist; if he denies, for instance, that the whole duty of man can be tabulated, it is only to adopt the even more untenable opinion that good conduct altogether eludes any rules, pattern or definition. Nevertheless, apart from the valueless sections on the New Testament, this is an immensely stimulating book, and the translator has performed a difficult task with great skill.

*Mary: Doctrine for Everyman*, by George Patrick Dwyer, D.D., and Thomas Holland, D.D. (Paternoster Publications 3s 6d).

THIS LITTLE BOOK expounds clearly the main aspects of Marian devotion. The value of the book is enhanced by the reverent care with which both authors safeguard from extravagance or misconception the titles "mediatress" and "co-redemptress," pointing out that Our Lady's role is entirely subordinate and dependent on Christ. There is no danger of the faithful being misled, or of non-Catholics being scandalised, by these titles when they are accompanied by such explanations. But when Dr. Dwyer so well emphasises, "clearly no one except Christ can be given the title of Redeemer in the sense in which we apply it to Him," is he not, perhaps, pointing to a real danger that these titles, now that they are beginning to be used freely in popular talk, can lead to misunderstanding? It is easier for the unlearned to adopt the names themselves than the qualifications and reservations with which theologians restrict their meaning. Ordinary folk sometimes tend to suppose that "mediatress" is simply the feminine of "mediator." In English, too, "Co-Redemptress" almost invites misunderstanding; for, while the "co-" is intended to distinguish the word from "Redeemer" and to imply a secondary and subordinate role, it can equally well, on the analogy of "co-partnership" and "co-signatory," suggest equality.

*Sculptured in Miniature*, by C. J. Quirk, S.J. (George Grady Press \$2.75).

THESE POEMS are all very short—one division consists of quatrains—and demand therefore an infinite skill, like Japanese carvings on cherry-stones. Fr. Quirk does not always quite achieve the fantastic virtuosity of his model, Fr. Tabb; but we sometimes find a flavour of Alice Meynell's delicate thought, which is better, and at least once, of Edgar Allen Poe, which is startling. He chooses, beside more expected themes, delightful subjects like the Spider, a Wrist-Watch, or, more gravely, the Hydrogen Bomb. He is certainly a leading poet in America.

*Poetry Now*, An Anthology edited by G. S. Fraser (Faber 15s).

MR. FRASER tells us that when he first sat down to compile this Anthology he thought of nearly two-hundred names: these he finally reduced to seventy-four. The poets he has chosen were those whose work flowered during or just after the Second World War. Sometimes, though, as with Edwin Muir, he has included poets established before 1939 whose best verse seems to him to have been written after that date.

In the handing-out of tickets, Mr. Fraser has not been rigidly exclusive. It is clear, however, that he prefers the wit-and-concept school (Donald Davie, John Wain, A. Alvarez, etc.) to the image-and-imagination manner of writing; but the presence of work by Sidney Keyes, David Wright, W. S. Graham and others is indicative of his desire to make the volume representative.

*A Rebel at Heart*, by Guy Rogers (Longmans 16s 6d).

AFTER READING this "Autobiography of a Nonconforming Churchman," we are left in no doubt that the octogenarian Canon Guy Rogers has always been *A Rebel at Heart*. He reveals the infinite comprehensiveness of the Church of England as few Anglican parsons have done, and glories in it. His long ministry included twenty-two years as Rector of Birmingham, and he has been a Chaplain to four Sovereigns. As to his religious opinions, they are nothing if not heterodox, and elastic because he has been on friendly terms with bishops and clergy of all schools of thought, including Bishop Barnes and Dom Bernard Clements, the Anglican Benedictine monk of Nashdom Abbey. Canon Rogers has done his utmost to encourage interdenominational communion services, and has always been in favour of admitting women to the priesthood of the Church of England. The life-story of this Irish-born stormy petrel has a real documentary value to an understanding of modern Anglicanism.

*Taboo*, by Franz Steiner. Introduction by E. E. Evans-Pritchard (Cohen and West 18s).

ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDIES so often degenerate into mere debunking that it is refreshing to find a book on taboo that does not set out to "debunk Frazer" or Tylor or Marett or other of the giants. If anything, Dr. Steiner gives the older generation a better run for their money than ever Frazer or Marett or Radcliffe-Brown did. But Dr. Steiner's researches are his own—he is the disciple of no one man. He was only forty-four when he died suddenly in 1952, and his book is no more than a series of lectures prepared for publication by Dr. Laura Bohannon, who also profited by discussions with him at Oxford (after the manner of Jowett Walk). Radcliffe-Brown himself used to say that no subject had so much nonsense written about it as anthropology, and Dr. Steiner deserves our thanks if only for sparing us the sifting of the nonsense written about his own anthropological topic. How pleasant, for instance, to find Captain Cook restored to his place as the discoverer (and, incidentally, for long the best exponent) of taboo. And the "civilised" taboos are treated with great fairness—the Victorian "unmentionables," for instance—as also the religious



ones of the Pentateuch, though it cannot be said that this vexed question is effectively answered. If "the proper study of Mankind is Man," here is indeed material for a human study in the most literal sense.

*Freud and Religious Belief*, by H. L. Philp (Rockliff 18s).

IT IS BECOMING more and more widely realised—and it was what he himself believed—that Freud's enduring work lay in the sphere not of religion, but of therapeutic method. His incursions into philosophical, theological and especially ethnological regions have always been met with justified critical opposition from recognised authorities and thinkers. But no refutation, not even the discrediting of the supposed facts on which his speculations sometimes relied, seems to have made him either doubt his own conclusions or abandon his dislike of institutional religion. Though he endeavoured to free men from their obsessions, he never succeeded in freeing himself from his own unreasoned and apparently unconsciously motivated atheistic materialism. Dr. Philp's book is a careful, detailed, critical study of Freud's views. It examines Freud's works in turn, his 1907 paper on *Obsessive Acts and Religious Practices*, *Totem and Taboo*, *The Future of an Illusion*, *Moses and Monotheism*—and gives, too, a short interesting account of the influences that shaped his outlook on religious faith.

*Every Eye*, by Isobel English (Andre Deutsch 10s 6d).

IN *Every Eye* Miss English has offered a variation on the Proustian theme of *recherche du temps perdu*. The difference is that the retrospection is not made from a point of suspended activity but from a centre of new happiness, contrasting strangely with an unhappy past.

The story, told in the first person, is that of a shy once unattractive woman married to a younger husband, and recalling—during their holiday travels—her difficult girlhood and frustrated early love. The sections of the novel (there are no formal chapters) alternate between past and present. Love-despair, love-illusion, love-understanding, love-forgiveness—they follow in a rhythmic sequence, until in the concluding pages of the book a hint of salvation is mysteriously conveyed.

Miss English, a Catholic author, writes with delicacy and wit. Her prose is a frieze of imagery; her phrases fertile but finely modulated. *Every Eye* is the work of a rare potential *petit maître*.

*Drama and Education*, By Philip A. Coggin (Thames and Hudson 21s).

IT IS A FAR CRY from the dithyrambic choruses of ancient Athens to the teaching of drama in modern schools and universities, yet Mr. Coggin transports us from one to the other, travelling by way of

Plato, the Roman stage, the medieval miracle-play, the Renaissance humanists, the Jesuit theatre, Rousseau and Goethe. He demonstrates the truth that drama is a vital force which has compelled the attention of Church and State, of philosophers and educationalists throughout the centuries. It is as natural to a child as movement, and to ignore the dramatic instinct may have disastrous results. Must all children, then, be trained to act? The author's answer to this question is one of the most interesting parts of the book. It need only be said here that he holds the view that the object of drama in education should be to produce, not actors, but fully developed human beings. The book should be of great value to all who have any interest in the theatre or in education. Drama, as the author forcibly shows, may be extolled or condemned: it cannot be ignored.

### COMMUNICATIONS

*Mr. E. I. Watkin writes:—*

SINCE my review article "The Problem of Borley Rectory" was published last August in *THE MONTH*, further evidence, which I am convinced is reliable, has been brought to my notice. Although it by no means exculpates Harry Price, it considerably diminishes the strength of the case against him. His statement that the Rectory *during his tenancy* was entirely free of rats and mice was certainly true. The skull and other bones found by Price in the well at the Rectory could not have been planted by him. For he was already suffering from the heart disease which finally killed him and was physically incapable of the digging required to do so.

*Miss Norah McGuinness (President, Irish Exhibition of Living Art) writes:—*

IN the March number of *THE MONTH*, Miss Dorothy Cole, in an article entitled "Religious Sculpture," states that Ireland was first represented at the Venice Biennale in 1956, and that Hilary Heron and Louis Le Brocqy were the first Irish artists chosen for this first representation.

This is incorrect. In 1950 Ireland was first represented at the Venice Biennale by Miss Nano Reid and myself. On that occasion the President of Italy bought one of my pictures for the Quirinal.

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ONE of the great occupational risks of business life under the pressure of to-day is that the practical man of affairs neglects his outside reading, and all too easily falls into a narrow circle of immediate preoccupations. There is always loss in this, and the Catholic business or professional man, as a member of the Church Universal, has a particularly strong reason for keeping his mind open to wider horizons. Certainly it was never more necessary than now to follow world happenings. A direct chain of causes and effects ties every business to economical changes in the world, which are themselves as often the consequence as the cause of changes in men's political and social ideas. These ideas in their turn come out of the religions, or irreligions, of contemporary man.

In many countries the Catholic Church is at the heart of the battle of ideas. Cardinal Manning's saying that "all great quarrels between men are at bottom theological" suggests that there is, in fact, no better starting-point or background for understanding the modern world than a Catholic one. Because of this approach and background.

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